Climate Justice Advocacy Good Practices

From Local to Global Action

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A Communion of Churches

This report is adapted from its interactive version on this **LWF website**

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Foreword

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is deeply committed to strengthening efforts for climate justice, advocating for climate action at all levels, and contributing to climate adaptation and mitigation among the most vulnerable.

LWF member churches and World Service country programs have developed expertise in various areas related to climate change, including the implementation of renewable energy systems, climate resilience approaches to protect farmers, climate-resilient agricultural practices, tree planting initiatives, watershed management, environmental education, strengthened understanding in eco-theology, and more.

The LWF is guided by the deep conviction that faith-based organizations (FBOs) have a central role to play in shaping a world where environmental stewardship is integrated with principles of justice and compassion. This conviction is underpinned by our faith and shaped by our theological understanding to care for God's creation.

In recent years, LWF and other FBOs have emerged as influential agents of positive change in addressing the challenges of climate change.

The following pages are a comprehensive exploration of climate justice and action through the lens of the LWF. This compilation is the result of a careful review of more than 80 projects implemented by LWF member churches, the World Service country programs and their partners. Extensive interviews with key leaders and staff involved in project implementation further enrich the insights gained from the document review.

This compilation reflects the collective wisdom and efforts of FBOs and faith communities committed to responding to the urgent call for climate justice. It serves as a repository of exemplary practices that celebrate transformative initiatives and underscore the unwavering commitment of the LWF and its partners to climate justice. Additionally, we anticipate expanding this collection in the coming months and years, incorporating new insights and experiences from ongoing projects and collaborations. Furthermore, we have been discussing and planning the development of FABO training modules and accessible resources for the LWF **Learning Platform** centered around this theme, where some of the examples featured in this compilation may serve as foundational material.

Navigating the intricate web of the triple planetary crisis—-climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution—this compilation seeks to inspire, guide, and ignite dialogues that bridge faith, climate justice, and social justice. Tailored for FBOs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government agencies, this compilation is a vital resource for advancing climate justice action.

As FBOs, religious leaders, and other faith actors delve into this compilation, they can use its insights to enrich their advocacy efforts, educational initiatives, and community engagement projects. NGOs and secular partners can use the wealth of information and diverse perspectives presented here to strengthen their climate justice campaigns, foster deeper collaboration with faith commu-

nities, and forge partnerships with government agencies. Similarly, governments can use this compilation to inform policy-making processes, develop climate action plans that prioritize equity and inclusion, and engage with faith-based organizations as key stakeholders in implementing sustainable solutions.

May this compilation serve as a source of inspiration and a call to action in our collective efforts to create a more just and sustainable world. Recognizing that climate justice is not merely an environmental imperative, but a sacred duty for the well-being of present and future generations.

Dr Maria Immonen
Director
Department for World Service

Rev. Dr Sivin Kit
Director
Department for Theology, Mission and Justice

Executive Summary

The Compilation of Climate Justice Good Practices is an integral part of the Local to Global Action for Climate Justice project implemented by the LWF with support from Bread for the World.

The main objective of the project is to identify and systematize exemplary initiatives led by faith-based organizations with the support of LWF member churches, World Service country programs and their partners, with a particular focus on adaptation, mitigation and advocacy for climate justice. These efforts aim to empower vulnerable groups, including youth and women.

The methodology employed a multifaceted approach that included desk reviews, a kick-off workshop, and key informant interviews conducted through various digital communication channels.

A robust database was carefully analyzed, reviewing information from 87 identified projects and capturing key details such as project proposals, progress reports, duration, country context, budget allocations, implementing and funding organizations, challenges faced, impacts observed, and key contacts. The research was supplemented by an analysis of documents and reports from international and faith-based organizations.

Within the context of this report, a climate justice good practice is defined as a demonstrated and replicable initiative that upholds principles of fairness, equity, and inclusivity in the areas of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and advocacy.

The selection process, guided by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) predefined criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact is as follows:

Relevance: Assess whether the initiative addresses relevant climate-related issues and is consistent with the project's overall objectives.

Coherence: Evaluate how the initiative aligns with the project's focus areas of adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy to ensure consistency and synergy in addressing climate challenges.

Effectiveness: Determine the results achieved by the initiative's activities, examining their tangible impact on local communities and their ability to effectively address climate-related challenges.

Efficiency: 1) Examine whether the initiative has led to positive changes in the lives of local communities, including increased resilience, enhanced capacity to address climate impacts, and integration of gender equity approaches. 2) Assess the extent to which youth and/or women have led activities, and whether churches and faith-based organizations in project countries have increased their commitment to climate justice. 3) Evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative in influencing national and regional policy makers to adopt ambitious climate change policies.

Sustainability: Consider whether the activities have brought long-term benefits to the community, ensuring that positive impacts are sustained beyond the life of the project.

Impact: Evaluate the potential scalability, replicability, or expansion of activities to determine their ability to make broader and lasting contributions to climate justice initiatives.

The 10 examples of climate justice good practices cover a range of issues and strategies, including advocacy and visibility, robust networking and multi-stakeholder approaches, community education and capacity building, biodiversity conservation, climate technologies, legal strengthening, and climate risk transfer.

Ms Elena Cedillo Vargas
Program Executive for Climate Justice

ARGENTINA:
Crece Selva Misionera

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

January 2020 to December 2022

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 173,000, with 85% coming from Bread for the World and several individual donors.

SNAPSHOT

A total of 310 initiatives aimed at raising awareness successfully sensitized 1,813 individuals from 39 different municipalities. The Crece Selva Misionera initiative addressed adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice activity. The project was implemented by the Protestant foundation Hora de Obrar, which is an initiative

from the Evangelical Church of the River Plate that focuses on the social and environmental development of Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

IMPLEMENTATION

Foundation Hora de Obrar

Context

The project was implemented in Misiones, a province situated in the Río de la Plata basin, an area abundant in wetlands, streams, and rivers.

These ecosystems were significantly impacted by an intensified drought, attributed to climate change and resulting in detrimental effects on biodiversity, the environment, and public health.

The forestry situation in the region is highly concerning.

The prolonged period of severe drought, lasting twenty-two months from 2020 onward, led to a substantial decrease in water levels of the Paraná and Uruguay rivers, as well as numerous forest fires and the loss of hundreds of hectares of forested land.

This situation served as an alarming indicator of the ongoing environmental crisis in the region and posed an unprecedented threat to biodiversity.

The project was highly relevant for a context severely affected by droughts and forest fires. It successfully regenerated 395 hectares of land in the Misiones province through the strategic planting of 178,000 trees along watercourse banks and fields.

These trees primarily consisted of native species, including fruit-bearing varieties. Additionally, it increased the demand for native plants within the province, leading to a positive impact on the production of nurseries specialized in cultivating these species.

Moreover, the project promoted a large-scale advocacy campaign incorporating social media coverage with international recognition and achieved wide results through a solid network.

Finally, it facilitated educational workshops that raised awareness of the detrimental effects of climate change and deforestation.

Strategies

Biodiversity conservation and restoration

Community education, awareness raising, and capacity-strengthening

Climate justice encompasses the principles of inclusivity and consideration of diverse stakeholders, especially vulnerable communities, in decision-making and actions concerning climate change.

The Evangelical Church of the River Plate commenced community works in Misiones by reaching out to rural producers, Mbyá Guaraní indigenous communities, local governing bodies, nongovernmental organizations, and educational institutions, among others.

A total of 310 awareness-raising initiatives have taken place, involving the participation of 1,813 individuals from 39 distinct municipalities. These actions addressed various subjects, including the impacts of climate change and the significant role that conservation and reforestation play in fostering environmental consciousness.

They aimed to enhance understanding of the Misiones jungle, its ecological functions, and its interconnection with the environment and climate change.

Multistakeholder approach

The Misiones jungle represents an ecosystem abundant in biodiversity and serves as a haven for a diverse range of flora and fauna, playing a critical role in the preservation of biodiversity. The unique benefits of this ecosystem only emphasize the importance of safeguarding its natural heritage.

The project recognizes the vital role of biodiversity preservation in fortifying the resilience of ecosystems amid ongoing challenges. Through the preservation of native plant and animal species inhabiting the Misiones jungle, the project actively contributes to reinforcing the ecosystem's capacity to adjust and endure the impacts of climate change.

> *"We have cultivated approximately forty-nine diverse species, including those suitable for timber production as well as medicinal and fruit-bearing varieties, tailored to meet specific demands. Furthermore, endangered species have been intentionally introduced to safeguard biodiversity and protect species at risk of extinction." (Romario Dohmann, project coordinator)*

The project successfully restored and reforested a total area of 395 hectares within the Misiones jungle, making a valuable contribution toward carbon capture and climate change mitigation. Moreover, the restoration of the ecosystem brought socioeconomic advantages to local communities, through the cultivation of fruit and medicinal species.

> *"For our agroforestry, the reforestation project allowed us to bring biodiversity to our farm, enriching cultivation areas with timber, fruit, and honey species. Undertaking these actions has enhanced the resemblance to our original forests." (Sergio Ott, agroecological producer in San Vicente)*

> *"Due to the persistent and prolonged drought, we were forced to reduce the planting windows down to a span of months to ensure the survival of the plants. Additionally, we implemented novel techniques such as incorporating hydrogel with the plantations, which, when combined with root moisture, provided plants extended durability without compromising on affordability, safety, or ecology." (Romario Dohmann, project coordinator)*

The objective of the project was to implement carbon fixation, combat water erosion, and integrate trees into the productive areas situated between the "yerbales" and farms. These ambitions aimed to reduce temperature levels and prevent direct exposure of plantations to sunrays.

> *"One of the primary concerns from the drought was the significant impact of high temperatures on the short lifespan of numerous valuable crops, including tea, cassava, and squash. Consequently, employing agroforestry systems aided in mitigating such risks by reducing temperatures and minimizing the likelihood of plantation losses. With this adaptation approach, we effectively modified the productive areas to tackle new climatic scenarios." (Romario Dohmann, project coordinator)*

Click here to watch a video on YouTube featuring Romario Dohmann.

The project embraced a comprehensive multistakeholder approach by engaging diverse communities, associations, and government entities to ensure both its success and long-term viability.

Among the contributors were the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), the National Institute of Yerba Mate (INYM), park rangers, the Municipality Ruiz de Montoya, the 2 de Mayo cooperative, and several universities. Additionally, the project actively collaborated with local producers and native Mbyá-Guaraní communities.

Through strategic advocacy efforts, including active involvement in the Trinational Network for Atlantic Forest Restoration, the organization established itself as a significant stakeholder in Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil.

As a testimony to its impact, the United Nations recognized the Atlantic Forest biome as deserving special protection in 2020, acknowledging the project's role in this achievement.

Local to Global to Local Approach

"Our primary focus lies in the local sphere, prioritizing communities and their specific needs. Once our project was established and progress made, we expanded our reach globally, by seeking connections with others. An instance of this is our collaboration with the Trinational Network for Atlantic Forest Restoration in Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. We have held multiple meetings, and our project received recognition in 2022 during the United Nations restoration decade and the Conference of Parties 15 in Montreal. We are proud to be counted among the top ten initiatives recognized for promoting good restoration practices." (Romario Dohmann, Coordinator of Crece Selva Misionera)

Target Group

The project employed an inclusive approach toward gender, Indigenous communities, and individuals with disabilities, while also actively encouraging the participation of young people.

Historically, reforestation has been perceived as the domain of men. To address this, the project deliberately sought to involve women more explicitly in the process. During mass awareness campaigns and reforestation efforts, women actively engaged in collaborative and communal tree-planting.

When working with children and adolescents in schools, the focus was placed on aiming to transcend gender-based roles, empowering younger generations to approach the work from a broader perspective. These initiatives represent the initial steps toward dismantling rigid gender roles that have governed the project's activities so far.

Although men predominated in project participation, the gender disparity was minimal. In the most recent phase, men accounted for 55.5% of those sensitized, while women comprised the remaining 44.5%, highlighting the conscious effort to increase female involvement.

The dedication to reforestation practices has fostered a stronger bond with the local indigenous communities, as the Mbyá-Guaraní people share a similar worldview, that prioritizes the preservation and restoration of the native forest.

As part of the inclusivity approach, tree-planting initiatives were undertaken at a hospital in Posadas, where braille signs were installed and, twice a year, large-scale planting events were organized, with an attendance ranging from 60 to 100 individuals. An open invitation was extended to anyone interested, of which 75% of the participants were under the age of thirty.

Impact

1. The project targeted and engaged 300 producers.

2. A restoration effort covered 395 hectares within the Misiones jungle.

3. An alliance was established with six nurseries producing native species.

4. Demand for native plants within the province increased, positively impacting the production of specialized nurseries.

5. This project has enabled the organization to establish itself as a leading authority in provincial reforestation endeavors.

6. Participation in the Trinational Network for Atlantic Forest Restoration positions the organization as a significant stakeholder in Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil.

7. The United Nations recognized the region as one of the biomes deserving protection in 2020.

8. The province of Chaco initiated necessary processes to expand the project's reach into its territory, ensuring not only its continuation but also an extension into new areas.

9. Media coverage increased on reforestation issues, fostering discussions within various sectors of the population that previously overlooked such proposals.

10. Participation and ownership of the project were taken by Mbyá-Guaraní native communities, ensuring a multistakeholder approach and project sustainability.

Replicability

The project successfully extended its reach to 39 separate municipalities within the region of Misiones. Furthermore, the project is set to be replicated in the neighboring province of Chaco and in Paraguay, which shares a border with Misiones.

The project successfully extended its reach to 39 separate municipalities within the region of Misiones. Furthermore, the project is set to be replicated in the neighboring province of Chaco and in Paraguay, which shares a border with Misiones.

These areas have similar ecological and environmental conditions, characterized by the presence of water springs and local communities reliant on the consumption of that water.

The core reforestation initiative is relatively straightforward to replicate. It primarily entails establishing effective coordination with local producers and stakeholders, collaborating with religious organizations and community groups, and ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation.

"As an instructive experience, I could mention that the flexibility to manage resources was key. Initially, our intention was to secure state funds for reforestation in certain areas, yet this objective could not be realized due to a lack of state funds and extreme bureaucracy. However, we obtained administrative support, collaboration, and logistical assistance, along with the active engagement of park rangers. In essence, we shifted from pursuing funding acquisition to fostering collaborative agreements and alliances." (Romario Dohmann, Coordinator of Crece Selva Misionera)

Sustainability

The networks established through the collaboration of various communities, organizations, and state entities have been designed with the intention of long-term sustainability. The collective synergy created within these networks provided opportunities and benefits for all sectors involved.

A significant portion, of the plantations, approximately 40%, were carried out in coordination with existing organizations that had already engaged with these producers and will continue to do so. As part of the project, an agreement was formed with the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) and the National Institute of Yerba Mate (INYM). The National Institute of Agricultural Technology, which was already supporting a group of producers, expanded its involvement to include tree-related activities with the initiative's support.

They conducted surveys with their producers and will continue to provide ongoing support. The National Institute of Yerba Mate also assists small producers by conducting regular discussions, training, and monitoring.

Furthermore, agreements were established with the municipality Ruiz de Montoya and the 2 de Mayo cooperative, both of which possess agricultural management capabilities.

These municipalities actively supported and identified interested individuals, while also providing follow-up assistance. Likewise, park rangers monitor reserve areas that caught fire, and they are dependent on the province's Ministry of Ecology.

"The National Institute of Agricultural Technology and the universities have tested these strategies on a small scale for 10 to 15 years and have proven their effectiveness. Although our project operates on a larger scale, we have

observed the cultivation of new trees becoming a habit. Thus, we believe that the successful trials conducted by The National Institute of Agricultural Technology and the universities can be applied to our project." (Romario Dohmann, Coordinator of Crece Selva Misionera)

The implementation of this project has stimulated the demand for native plants within the province, positively impacting nurseries specializing in these species. Consequently, the number of individuals interested in incorporating native plants into their land has increased. This trend indicates a growing adoption of agroforestry practices, both within and beyond the scope of this project.

This project has acted as an initial catalyst, motivating individuals to independently pursue these practices, not merely as hobbies but as productive strategies to adapt to the current climate reality. Government practices are now incorporating tree planting into their financing projects for producers. This includes allocating the budget for subsidies and actively encouraging community participation and suggestions.

In summary, the collaborative effort has cultivated community ownership and engagement, paving the way for the long-term success and sustainability of the project.

COLOMBIA: Communities of Arauca in Defense of the Territory and the Environment

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

2014 to 2024

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 130,000 by ACT Church of Sweden, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

SNAPSHOT

In this initiative, The Lutheran World Federation strengthened communities striving for their environmental rights in the Arauca department by reinforcing citizen participation mechanisms, defending their territories, and promoting en-

vironmental awareness and education within the region. Ultimately, the project contributed to finding alternative methods to reduce and eliminate degrading practices and mitigate their negative impacts.

With 250 direct beneficiaries and 17,000 indirect beneficiaries, this project has brought together local farmers residing within the oil complex to undertake re-forestation and land-recovery initiatives. The Communities of Arauca in Defense of the Territory and the Environment initiative addressed adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy.

IMPLEMENTATION

Lutheran World Federation, Colombia and Venezuela World Service Country Program

Context

Arauca is currently experiencing a post-conflict scenario, primarily related to the exploitation of natural resources. These conflicts include inhabitant pressure on extractive industries to employ local labor, the destruction of entire ecosystems by oil companies without sufficient control from environmental authorities, and the displacement of communities with reparations perceived as unfair by the affected population.

In this context, new conflicts may emerge due to issues related to access to and appropriation of natural resources. In particular, the damage and disappearance of the Lipa ecosystem is one of the most relevant socio-environmental conflicts in eastern Colombia.

This situation arises directly from inappropriate agricultural production practices and an extractive development model. It is further exacerbated by inadequate environmental governance and an unfavorable environmental context.

The detrimental practices have raised concerns among communities, prompting them to take direct action to prevent, mitigate, and restore the damages caused to the ecosystem.

Strategies

Community education, sensitization, and capacity-building

The community played a vital role in identifying the problem at hand. The local committees, operating in various territories, effectively identified, highlighted, and promoted good practices independently.

In this context, the capabilities of the five environmental committees of the Lipa lagoon were strengthened, in areas such as:

- The application of the "Todo Derecho" methodology, which involved identifying cultural, social, and economic impacts derived from the presence of the extractive company (learning about rights and how they are affected).

- Good agroecological practices for land care, especially with land preparation and cultivation.

- Organic waste utilization, including recycling and reuse of waste.

This enabled them to identify the problem more effectively and determine appropriate scenarios in which to raise awareness. All these efforts were aimed at fostering organizational and social cohesion within a challenging context characterized by armed conflict.

On the other hand, the LWF organized multiple environmental conservation trainings and developed a "Booklet of Good Environmental Practices in Rural Arauca" aimed at mitigating the adverse environmental effects resulting from traditional practices. The primary objective was to enhance the handling and management of environmental impact caused by unsustainable methods.

Despite the presence of an oil company in the region and the challenge of the Lipa lagoon drought, the community received continuous support, which enabled them to regain access to their territory. Moreover, they successfully integrated agroecological techniques into their cultivation of cocoa, plantain, and corn, leading to the restoration of their livelihoods.

Multistakeholder approach

Throughout the project, various agreements and conventions were established with different organizations and institutions, enabling collaboration to create a more substantial impact and advocacy. One notable agreement was made in 2019 with the Information Centre on Business and Human Rights (CIEDH).

Additionally, specific collaborations were undertaken with environmental committees in Lipa, along with other prominent organizations like the Association of Councils and Traditional Authorities of the Department of Arauca (ASCATIDAR), the Joel de Sierra Human Rights Foundation, and the Permanent Committee for Human Rights of Arauca (CPDH) to raise awareness and denounce human rights issues.

Moreover, CAMPROLIPA, ASOJUNTAS, and MOCIPAR maintained relations with several entities, including the environmental authority of the area, CORPORINOQUIA (the environmental authority of the area), the Ombudsman's Office, the Health Unit of Arauca, the Departmental Assembly, the mayors' offices of Arauca, Saravena, Tame, Puerto Rondón, and Arauquita, and the Government of Arauca. Collaborations were also extended to include the Unión Sindical Obrera (USO), various non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions such as the Fundación Orinoquia Biodiversa, Social Ministry, the National University of Colom-

bia – Orinoquía Campus, and the Observatory of Environmental Conflicts, part of the Institute of Environmental Studies at the same university in Bogota.

Through these collaborations, the member organizations have consistently recognized the vital role played by both CAMPROLIPA and the LWF, enhancing their status as authorities in the field and strengthening their advocacy efforts.

Advocacy and visibility

The project addressed various advocacy initiatives at the local, national, and international levels.

In 2016, the LWF coordinated a forum in Arauca, "**Arauca: An Ecosystem at Risk**", which convened local authorities, institutions, and community members. Its main objective was to hear various positions and proposals regarding environmental conflicts, that affect the department of Arauca, especially the ecosystem made up of its estuaries, the river, and the Lipa lagoon.

Likewise, the project received significant coverage on various social media platforms, including **Meridiano 70**, **Crudo Transparente**, **Publimetro**, and **Las2Orillas**, implementing numerous mechanisms addressing the problem of visibility, including establishing a guardianship in 2018 and introducing community alerts within the ombudsman's office. These efforts extended beyond local measures and encompassed legal avenues.

To watch the video "Arauca: An Ecosystem at Risk", please click here.

To watch the intervention from Nataly Trejos, please click here.

To watch the intervention from Alejandro Pulido, please click here.

To watch the intervention from William Salazar, please click here.

Local to Global to Local Approach

The project included several trainings and workshops to enhance the community's resilience. This was achieved through professionals who actively participate in national and international discussions on corporate responsibility concerning human rights and the potential for obtaining reparations through civil society organizations. Additionally, the experts participating in workshops and trainings conform with national and global environmental guidelines, encompassing sustainability and technical considerations.

Target Group

The dedication to reforestation practices has fostered a stronger bond with the local indigenous communities, as the Mbyá-Guaraní people share a similar worldview, that prioritizes the preservation and restoration of the native forest.

The population consisted mainly of rural communities that were influenced by fluctuations in water currents, like floods and droughts, and changes in local biodiversity, which threaten their food security, and the gradual loss of farm productivity.

There were 250 direct beneficiaries and 17,000 indirect beneficiaries. The environmental committees of Lipa and the villages under their jurisdiction, along with the associations of Community Action Boards in the rural areas of Arauca and Arauquita, and, to a lesser extent, communities in Fortul, Saravena, and Puerto Rondón, were considered. Organizations affiliated with the Board of Civic and Popular Organizations of Arauca (Mocipar) and the committees advocating for popular consultation in the aforementioned municipalities were also considered.

The entire population of the municipalities participated in the popular consultation processes and environmental impact studies. This involved a total of 186,741 individuals from the municipalities of Arauca, Arauquita, Puerto Rondón, Fortul, and Saravena, who have indirect connections with the water regime of the Lipa estuary.

> *"Despite the challenges posed by the forced recruitment of young individuals into the armed forces, we were able to achieve the goal of engaging fifteen young people in active participation, as set for the year 2023. Additionally, during the four-year project period, we successfully achieved the target of involving forty-five young people in active participation. We encourage the engagement of women, men, and children, striving to tailor our methodologies to suit the specific needs of these diverse population groups. In this particular context, the impact of armed conflict and recruitment predominantly affects men, while women tend to remain in the territory. Despite the deeply patriarchal cultural backdrop in the area, it is noteworthy that women leaders currently exist in Lipa. These leaders hold equal positions, yet women predominantly*

voice the opinions and assume representational roles." (Erika Andrea Carvajal, PME&Q Coordination Colombia and Venezuela Program; Steffany Marimon Vidal, Project Professional PME, LWF World Service Colombia Program)

Impact

1. The consolidation of five permanent committees was undertaken, and their organizational capacity was strengthened through affiliation.

2. Individuals returned to the region, signifying their reintegration and settlement within the oil complex. They also embraced agroecological principles in cultivating cocoa, plantain, and corn, thus preserving their previous way of life.

3. The communities now possess a comprehensive understanding of the various factors contributing to social issues and human rights violations.

4. Professional expertise and technical organizations have been integrated with the communities' indigenous ancestral knowledge, traditional farming practices, and Afro-descendant wisdom.

5. Technical and scientific evidence has been generated on the environmental impact caused by oil projects in the area of influence of the Estero del Lipa.

6. Effective forums have been established to serve as negotiation platforms within the framework of the enforceability and justiciability of human rights, aiming to address problems and violations.

7. The issue has gained widespread recognition at the local, national, and international levels, with participation from government entities such as the ombudsman's office.

Replicability

The Lipa lagoon is a scenario that moves within oil exploitation, presenting a tangible problem that has led to the destruction of ecosystems.

In this case study, the adverse climatic effects of these practices have been slowed or reduced. However, in other

areas without organized communities, the destruction has been complete, leading to irreversible damage.

> *"The in-depth impacts of hydrocarbon exploitation around the world have led to a global crisis. We need to explore alternative energy sources that are in harmony with nature, as this model has proven to be a failure for communities and has resulted in economic losses for industries. Therefore, this project can serve to shed light on the issue and explore alternative energy sources from the perspectives of the communities involved." (Erika Andrea Carvajal, PME&Q Coordination Colombia and Venezuela Program; Steffany Marimon Vidal, Project Professional PME, LWF World Service Colombia Program)*

This project served to strengthen the community to find its own solutions to problems. For example, similar mechanisms are being put in place in other communities like Chocó and Río Atrato, where illegal mining poses significant challenges, impacting the well-being of the affected communities.

Sustainability

The gatherings, including meetings, workshops, awareness-raising initiatives, monitoring activities, and advocacy actions, conducted by the five environmental committees, have been organized systematically.

These gatherings incorporate a monitoring and verification component to ensure compliance, thereby guaranteeing the long-term viability of the process.

> *"Regarding the processes of restoring the soil and land, the sustainability comes from the communities, given their profound understanding of past events and the importance of commencing the recovery of their territory using their own capabilities, taking small steps toward its restoration. All the aforementioned organizations are based in Arauca but operate nationwide, allowing them to mobilize efforts related to this matter within their respective frameworks." (Erika Andrea Carvajal, PME&Q Coordination Colombia and Venezuela Program; Steffany Marimon Vidal, Project Professional PME, LWF World Service Colombia Program)*

On the other hand, the pursuit of alliances to secure funding for the organization has significantly contributed to accessing additional resources for the LWF, leading to a more substantial impact. In this context, various agreements were established with other organizations representing indigenous communities, such as the Association of Councils and Traditional Authorities of the Department of Arauca (ASCATIDAR).

Additionally, the Joel de Sierra Human Rights Foundation, which has been actively engaged in projects to expose and denounce violations, has collaborated with organizations currently residing in the area. Furthermore, the Permanent Committee for the Human Rights of Arauca (CPDH), operating at a national level,

has brought together local farmers residing within the oil complex to undertake initiatives focused on territory recovery and reforestation.

COLOMBIA: Defense of the Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights of Ethnic Communities in the Atrato Basin

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

March to December 2019 (Phase 2); March 2022 to February 2025 (Phase 3)

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 130,000 (Phase 2) / EUR 35,000 (Phase 3); Canton of Geneva (Switzerland), ACT Church of Sweden (Phase 2); ACT Church of Sweden, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Phase 3)

SNAPSHOT

The project was highly relevant as it contributed to achieving the full recognition of the rights of ethnic-territorial organizations that have been affected by the socio-environmental impacts of extractive activities in the region, as well as historical exclusion and marginalization. Additionally, the project has addressed violence perpetrated by illegal armed actors in the area. For the first time in Colombia, and for the third time in the world, a river was recognized as a legal personhood. The project indirectly benefited more than 400,000 inhabitants of the Atrato basin, belonging mainly to black communities and indigenous peoples who, through ruling T-622, found legal, technical, and public policy tools to strengthen their initiatives in food sovereignty and guarentee their rights. The initiative is designed to address adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy.

Implementation

The Lutheran World Federation Colombia and Venezuela World Service Country Program and Centro Socio Jurídico para la Sefensa Territorial Siembra (Phase 2 and 3)

Through its efforts, the project has brought national and international attention to these issues and worked toward ensuring that affected communities gain the recognition and support they deserve.

This project represents a seamless extension of previous collaborative initiatives within the region.

The initial phase received funding from the European Union between 2015 and 2018. Following that, the subsequent phase was financed by the Canton of Geneva from 2019 to 2020, and the final phase is currently being funded by Fondo Canasta, with a three-year project from 2022 to 2025.

As a result, the collective impact is the culmination of several years of dedicated efforts within the region.

One of the initial outcomes of the efforts invested in the region was the landmark ruling T-622 of 2016. This ruling had a significant impact as it mandated the preservation of the region's biocultural wealth and granted the Atrato river legal personhood.

Furthermore, the communities have made substantial progress in the implementation of the action plans aimed at ensuring compliance with the court ruling.

The ethnic communities residing in the Atrato river basin actively participated in advocacy and training processes to secure the improvement of food sovereignty and self-sustainability within their territories.

They accomplished this by developing economic initiatives through careful planning.

Context

Extractive economies have a disproportionate impact on nature and the rights of the communities where they are implemented. In Colombia, the fact that these economies are promoted as the foundation of the development model is one of the country's most challenging problems, together with their link to armed conflicts in vast regions.

It is necessary to propose alternative approaches to address this problem. This model of dispossession has historically led to injustice, rights violations, deepened inequality, and triggered numerous socio-environmental conflicts.

These conflicts revolve around the access to and control of common goods, pitting actors who have opposing interests and values against each other, all within a context of power imbalance.

The deployment of extractive policies and projects, both legal and illegal, with involvement from national and transnational capital, poses a significant threat to the free and autonomous pursuit of territorial initiatives that ethnic communities have built over the years.

This project arises to protect the Atrato river, which is the main river in the department and has been directly affected by illegal mining and is currently contaminated by mercury.

> *"Chocó is a region with a large presence of ethnic population (indigenous and Afro descendants) mired in inequality and poverty, that has been affected by the armed conflict and by illegal economies (armed groups). Natural resources are illegally exploited by armed groups and international companies, thus diminishing the right to a healthy environment, clean water, and affecting the food sovereignty and cultural traditions of the groups in the region." (Steffany Marimon Vidal, Project Professional PME, LWF World Service Colombia Program)*

The first phase of the project gave rise to ruling T-622 of 2016, which gave the river legal personhood and ordered the protection of the rights of ethnic communities to life, water, a healthy environment, culture, and territory.

However, the degree of compliance of those responsible has been weak and the Ministry of Agriculture has not given it the necessary priority.

"In 2018, the group of guardians of the Atrato was formed. These groups engage in advocacy and participatory activities that ensure sustainability through planning and economic initiatives." (Steffany Marimon Vidal, Project Professional PME, LWF World Service Colombia Program)

For this reason, SIEMBRA (formerly Tierra Digna) provides support for the defense of the rights and territory of several communities in the country that are affected by socio-environmental impacts. They do so through three strategies: environmental justice, extraction and corporate power, and smallholder and ethnic-territorial rights.

This is the case of the communities in the Atrato river basin, who undertook a guardianship action to protect the Atrato river, which was resolved by the constitutional court through ruling T-622 of 2016.

In this ruling, the court ordered to safeguard the region's biocultural wealth and declared the Atrato river a legal personhood. Similarly, it ordered the formulation of three action plans aimed at: reforesting and ecologically restoring the basin; recovering food sovereignty, lifestyles, and the cultural values of the riverside communities; and neutralizing illegal mining.

In addition, the court ordered the appointment of two guardians of the river, one state and one community. The Ministry of the Environment was designated as the guardian for the state and the communities formed the Collegiate Body of Guardians of the Atrato (CCGA), an articulation of seven representative organizations from the entire basin, who have assigned fourteen community leaders.

Strategies

Criminalization of the use of mercury

The above-mentioned ruling T-622 of 2016 and bill 059-20 are two legal instruments of relevance. The latter aims to strengthen the punitive repression of the illegal exploitation of minerals, criminalizing behaviors related to the use of mercury and the commercialization, exploitation, and transport of minerals of illegal origin.

This bill is a significant step toward strengthening controls because, without these measures, the actors, individuals, and officials involved in the criminal chain can continue to benefit from the high impunity of the penal system that prevails today.

These initiatives focus on strengthening legal instruments to provide the communities and the state with penal, administrative, and sanctioning tools to fight crime, counteract the illegal exploitation of minerals in ecosystems, reduce environmental damage, reduce social and economic impacts, and other activities related to exploration, exploitation, transportation, and marketing.

Advocacy activities

An online advocacy event, A River with Rights: The Case of the Atrato in Colombia, was held with around 90 participants and included participation from several partners, such as the LWF, Fian, Alianza, and Clima.

Additionally, participants joined from other non-government organizations, such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Earthjustice, Greenpeace, Caritas, and from various universities. Most of the participants were from European countries (Switzerland, Germany, Austria, France, Finland, Sweden, and so on), North America, and Colombia, and there were also some participants from Central America, Peru, and Africa.

As part of its advocacy strategies, the project had wide local, national, and international coverage in different news and social media platforms such as El Espectador, **Puntos**, **Unidad para las Victimas**, **France24**, **Centro Socio Jurídico para la Defensa Territorial**, **elDiario.es**, among others. Additionally, it has its own **online platform**, where news and updates are shared.

The advocacy strategies were affected by COVID-19. Therefore, to adapt the plan to the new context, the official website of the guardians of the Atrato was created.

This features a presentation of what the Collegiate Body of Guardians of the Atrato is, how the ruling arose, what its orders are, what progress has been made, what actions the body has developed, and what investigations have been **carried out under the ruling**.

In 2020, **the project was presented in El Espectador**, with wide coverage in Colombia. Here, the context and existing implementation of sentence T-622 was explained. Additionally, Leyner Palacios, the Pacific Truth Commission Secretary publicly stated:

"We want to know the truth about the real interests behind these large agro-industrial and development projects and how the armed conflict is used to deprive the population of the territory and then carry out these massive projects." **(Source: El Espectador)**

In 2022 there was an event at the University of Glasgow organized in conjunction with ABColombia, a coalition of 100-plus partner organizations operating in South American countries, including several Catholic Caritas-affiliated agencies: the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF), the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), representing the bishops of England and Wales, and Trócaire from Ireland, which was **covered by EarthBeat**.

Moreover, the project participated in the Award for the Best Leaders of Colombia 2019 organized by Semana Magazine. The Guardians were among the twenty finalists nationwide, among more than 400 applicants.

Finally, the Collegiate Body of Guardians, in coordination with the cultural house MOTETE and Tierra Digna, created the Atrato Fest festival, dedicated to highlighting the culture around the Atrato River, the identity of its inhabitants, and the protection of the basin. The Atrato Fest has been part of the approach to make the T-622 ruling part of the daily life of citizens.

The first edition of the festival was held from August to September 2019 and was celebrated in Quibdó and six other municipalities: Medio Atrato, Vigía del Fuerte, Río Quito, El Carmen de Atrato, Carmen del Darién, and Atrato.

Finally, the festivities of the patron saint of Quibdó, known as the "San Pacho" carnival, have been declared Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Since 2019, these celebrations have served as a tribute to the Atrato river, symbolizing the community's deep reverence for their natural environment. The Collegiate Body of Guardians, together with the Fiestas Franciscanas Foundation, led an agenda to raise awareness and disseminate knowledge of the T-622 ruling within the framework of the festivities.

Between September and October, the Guardians participated in the traditional masses, workshops were held in the city's schools, and a campaign, A deal with the Atrato, was developed. The Atrato river was the protagonist of the festivities, and its inhabitants recognized the transcendental role it has in forging Chocoana culture.

Community education, sensitization, and capacity-building

The communities received training and education about the implementation of ruling T-622 and its meaning and importance for the river's rights recognition. For this reason, and to share the progress achieved in its implementation, an explanatory textbook was prepared and used during the community training.

The Guardians were sensitized on food sovereignty, diversity, sustainability, and how the development of mining has deteriorated their sources of food, health, and livelihoods.

Several training sessions focused on strengthening the community to manage their enterprises were carried out:

1. A session on the care and handling of chickens was held in San Isidro for the beneficiaries of chicken breeding, with 22 participants.

2. Basic accounting sessions were conducted with four vulnerable groups in Quibdó, Riosucio, with 38 participants.

3. A workshop on evironmental protection took place in Riosucio, with 14 participants.

4. Nine embroidery and sewing workshops were held for young people from the "Raíces y alas" and "Choibá" handicrafts group in Quibdó, with 18 participants per workshop.

5. Workshops focusing on knowledge exchange in traditional medicine were conducted in Riosucio, with 40 women participants.

The trainings targeted above all the women of the communities; nowadays there are women leaders and women who design initiatives or agroecological projects.

Finally, within the framework of articulation and comprehensive strengthening, support was provided for the action undertaken by the Chocó Solidarity Interethnic Forum (FISCH). It launched the Centre for Sustainable Productive Development, as a space to incubate and articulate productive initiatives throughout Chocó in order to build food sovereignty for the region.

After receiving training to strengthen communities to manage their enterprises, they implemented five productive initiatives: Community laying hens for social reconstruction; recovery of traditional medicine; women of legal age making soaps, rags and recycling; women heads of families involved in making candles and handicrafts; young people weaving and embroidery.

Local to Global to Local

At the local level, the focal point was in the community strengthening of the Collegiate Body of Guardians and Guardians of Atrato and its member organizations. Moreover, staff of the municipalities also participated. At the national level, there were different incidence activities with the ministries, such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Agriculture; the National Police Unit against illegal mining, the National Army, Governors, and other competent authorities of the state to ensure full and effective implementation of the ruling. At the international level, there were several advocacy activities (see above) with efficient and wide exposure, resulting in the local community being strengthened thanks to international pressure.

Target Group

The project directly benefited the 14 Guardians of Atrato (seven women and seven men) and 20 people from their support team, through accompaniment and advice for the exercise of their role in the execution of ruling T-622.

Indirect beneficiaries: the project indirectly benefited more than 400,000 inhabitants of the Atrato basin, belonging mainly to black communities and indigenous peoples who, through the work to implement ruling T-622 and the analyses generated, found legal, technical, and public policy tools to strengthen their initiatives in food sovereignty and guarantee their rights.

Impact

1. For the first time in Colombia, and for the third time in the world, a river was recognized as a legal person, meaning that the river is considered a living entity that sustains other forms of life and cul-

tures and that it is not an object of appropriation, but a subject of protection.

2. The support for these first seven productive initiatives has given a boost to 127 families (508 people directly), to recover their livelihoods.

3. **T**he project implemented the yearly tradition of celebrating the Atrato Fest and San Pacho, with the river as the protagonist of both celebrations, which creates a sense of identity and belonging and celebrates the transcendental role of the river in Chocoana culture.

4. The project has been a great success due to its incidence in implementing the delayed orders of ruling T-622, as well as strengthening the organizational process of the Collegiate Body of Guardians of Atrato.

Replicability

The difficulties in the Chocoano context due to the armed conflict are a constant risk. In order to mitigate its impact on the project, it must always be coordinated with local organizations, rigorous contextual analysis, and inclusion of mitigation strategies in the planning of activities.

At the Collegiate Body of Guardians of the Atrato level, it is vital to strengthen the work carried out by the technical secretariat at the head of the Foro Interétnico Solidaridad Chocó, which allows the articulation of all the organizations that comprise it and also provides technical support to the Guardians.

The main lesson learned from the project is that, although the importance of advocating for ruling compliance and strengthening the local communities, the main goal should be for the population to achieve food sovereignty.

Finally, the process of supporting productive initiatives should be guided by criteria that ensure economic viability, social justice, environmental health, and cultural acceptance Regarding the project's replicability, this marks the third instance worldwide where a river has been acknowledged as a legal entity with rights, following the Ganges in India and the Wanganui in New Zealand. Importantly, it represents the first recognition of a river as a legal personhood in the Americas, which could serve as a precedent for extending legal protections to rivers in neighboring countries or worldwide.

Furthermore, the replicability of the strategy is underscored by comparable initiatives in the region, like Colombia's Arauca project. Both endeavors share a common focus on empowering local communities to proactively address challenges associated with extractive economies. They achieved this through the dissemination of legal education, awareness programs, and effective coping strategies, among others.

Sustainability

The project's long-term viability resided in its dedication to enhancing the community's resilience to the adverse effects of climate change. This was achieved through a threefold approach:

Raising awareness: The project focused on increasing awareness among the communities about the legal mechanisms available to tackle the impact of climate change.

Capacity building: The project fostered self-sustainability and sustainable subsistence, the project provided valuable training to the community and provided them with the skills and knowledge needed to implement alternative and sustainable practices in their daily lives.

Supporting local initiatives: The project actively supported and promoted local initiatives geared toward self-sustainability.

Moreover, the Collegiate Body of Guardians served as the backbone of the project, ensuring a strong and organized structure to execute its objectives effectively. Furthermore, the communities of Atrato gather annually to celebrate the San Pacho and Atrato Fest, with the river taking center stage as the main protagonist.

This festive event is an integral part of the local culture and traditions, showcasing the community's deep connection with the river and its surroundings.

Finally, the project employed a multistakeholder approach, involving various institutions from both state and non-state entities at local, national, and international levels. This collaborative effort ensured a unified focus on achieving the project's objectives, enhancing its impact and sustainability.

In summary, the project's long-term success centered on its commitment to strengthening the community's resilience to climate change impacts.

This was achieved through awareness-raising, capacity building, and support for local initiatives, all facilitated by the solid organizational structure provided by the Collegiate Body of Guardians. Furthermore, the project fostered cooperation between diverse stakeholders, promoting a shared vision of sustainable development.

EL SALVADOR: Microclimate Insurance (Pilot Project)

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

March 2021 to August 2022 (Phase 1); May to October 2023 (Phase 2).

BUDGET AND FUNDING

Phase 1: USD 70,000, Candian Lutheran World Relief, Canadian Food Grains Bank, Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council, University of Toronto, and the Lutheran World Federation.

Phase 2: USD 15,000, Manitoba Council for International Cooperation

SNAPSHOT

This initiative was designed to address adaptation and mitigation to climate change and focuses on addressing losses and damages from climate change. This project supported nearly 300 vulnerable farmers in the dry corridor of El Salvador to cope with climate-related losses and damages. It provided microclimate insurance along with adaptation practices to increase resilience.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Lutheran World Federation Central America World Service Country Program. Co-implemented by Agricultural Development Bank (BFA).

The project targeted communities in the dry corridor of Central America, an area susceptible to extreme rainfall, persistent droughts, and floods. As a consequence of these conditions, a vast number of households in El Salvador regularly suffer from chronic food insecurity.

The LWF proposed a highly relevant pilot project to this context, as this microclimate insurance initiative aimed to prevent, minimize, and compensate for the losses and damages that surpass the capacity of small-scale farmers' adaptation to climate change.

The first phase of the pilot project (March 2021 – August 2022) targeted the departments of San Miguel, Usulután, San Vicente, and La Paz. It focused on facilitating access to microclimate insurance for vulnerable smallholder farmers who are currently accessing loans from the Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario (BFA) but are at risk of defaulting over 12 months.

The incentive consisted of a subsidy of 50% of the insurance cost (going from USD 100 to USD 3,000) to create additional motivation for farmers to sign up for the insurance, as this product was still largely unknown to them. Moreover, the project provided training on resilient agriculture.

The second phase of the project (May–October 2023) targeted the departments of La Paz, San Vicente, and Usulután and focused on a smaller insurance cost subsidy (25%) and on studying the impacts of microclimate insurance as a way of building up resilience to climate-related shocks for smallholder farmers.

The corresponding University of Toronto study is ongoing and aims to examine the impact of subsidization and assess the possibility of removing it entirely in future projects. Moreover, the study aims to measure and analyze the benefits of

having an insurance with agricultural credits that reduces the risk of crop losses. In addition, there is an ongoing research collaboration with the University of Toronto to provide learnings directly from the execution of this project.

The LWF Central America Program previously partnered with the Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario via workshops and public forums on the transfer of risks, losses, and damages caused by climate change under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM). In this context, the bank partnered with the LWF for the implementation of the project.

The project combined more traditional approaches to working with small-scale farmers in communities vulnerable to frequent climatic disasters.

This involved providing training and support to enhance their understanding of and access to resilient agricultural practices. Specifically, the project focused on training farmers in the preparation of green manures (organic products) that can improve soil quality, reduce reliance on chemical pesticides, and promote efficient water use for irrigation when available.

Subsequently, each participant was provided with a kit of items to support their training, including canavalia seeds, chicken manure, molasses, yeast, and plastic barrels for mixin manure. The project also facilitated access to parametric insurance for smallholder farmers, to protect them in the case of crop loss due to climatic disasters. Parametric insurance differs from traditional agricultural insurance (based on actual crop losses) available to small-scale farmers.

Other researchers have also noted that parametric insurance could be a very effective way to address the trap many small-holder farmers in developing countries fall into, namely, borrowing money to finance their inputs, losing those inputs to climate-related shocks, and falling further into debt or losing their livelihoods altogether.

Parametric insurance could also help avoid many of the pitfalls associated with traditional insurance, where compensation is provided through verifiable, but often subjective, losses. With weather (or climate) index insurance the payout is connected to an objective variable that neither the bank nor the farmer can control such as the level of rainfall. Therefore, this reduces (or even eliminates) the risk of disputes over whether a payout should be made.

Additionally, with traditional insurance, there can be an incentive for farmers to reduce their efforts to receive a payout which is a risk that does not exist with parametric insurance. (Source: Sibiko, K. W., Veettil, P. C. and Qaim, M., “Small Farmers’ Preferences for Weather Index Insurance: Insights from Kenya,” Agric & Food Secur 7 (2018): 53.

Context

El Salvador, located in the dry corridor of Central America, is recognized as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate risks worldwide.

The increasing variability of rainfall and temperature poses a significant threat to the food security and livelihoods of smallholder farmers living in heavily deforested and hilly areas.

It has been predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that by 2050 rising temperatures will reduce the yields of El Salvador's primary crops by up to 30%. Crop simulation models predict that sorghum and maize yields could decrease by up to 20%, and dry bean yields could decrease by 50% by 2065 (Source: P. V. Vara Prasad, "Impact of Climate Change and Climate Variability on Productivity of Grain Crops," University of Nebraska INTSORMIL Presentations (2011), 46), having direct implications on food security, especially in the dry corridor of the country.

The locations targeted by the project are prone to excessive rainfall, prolonged droughts, heatwaves, and floods. Prolonged droughts have been increasingly affecting the area since 2014, and farmers have had less yield on their crops and trees every year.

Due to water scarcity, fruit trees including avocados, summer fruits, mangoes, bananas, and others, have experienced a reduction in their harvests.

As a consequence of these conditions, more than half of households in El Salvador are currently suffering from **some degree of chronic food insecurity**. Based on the latest data available from July and August 2021, over 800,000 people in El Salvador, which accounts for 13% of the population analyzed, faced severe levels of acute food insecurity categorized as crisis or worse (Integrated Food Security IPC Phase 3 and higher).

This situation was primarily attributed to the compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, elevated food prices, and **reduced family income**. Their vulnerability is largely due to a dependence on traditional rainfed production systems, mainly centered around crops like maize, beans, and sorghum.

These agricultural practices contribute to soil degradation and leave them more susceptible to the impact of climate-related shocks and disruptions.

Agricultural producers increasingly rely on loans to support their crops. These loans are scheduled according to the agricultural calendar and are typically disbursed 12 months after the expected harvest. While these loans are essential for most farmers, they can also place them in a vulnerable position in the event of crop losses due to climate-related extreme weather events, which are common in the target area. Farmers are forced to rely even more heavily on credit, resulting in higher levels of indebtedness.

A recent LWF situational assessment found that 82% of respondents had resorted to coping strategies in the past year. These included selling personal food reserves, skipping meals, selling livestock and using savings to buy food.

In addition, many farmers are at risk of losing or have already lost their agricultural livelihoods. As a result, they have been forced to seek informal employment, underemployment, or migration to other countries, mostly the United States.

> *"I lost my plantation once, so I needed to sow twice with a bank credit. Therefore, I had to borrow money to pay the bank on time and prevent the delay from generating interest. That is why the project has been so beneficial because if there is a loss of crops, it will prevent me from owing the bank and losing the money I invested: this insurance guarantees that it will not happen to me again. Yes, I have walked alone, but now, with insurance, I am going to walk alongside with hope." (Marta Julia Ramirez, Participant in the Microclimate Insurance Pilot Project)*

Strategies

Community education, awareness raising and capacity-building

Numerous communities adopt practices that harm soil moisture and fertility. One such example is the use of fire for land clearance, which results in the depletion of vegetation and trees. Consequently, the soil becomes vulnerable to the impact of rainfall and loses moisture through evaporation.

Moreover, this practice can lead to uncontrollable wildfires, causing damage to the remaining vegetation in the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the targeted communities were sensitized to the causes and direct effects of climate change on agriculture.

The main objective was to equip them with knowledge on understanding how to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector through the adoption of agroecological practices and alternative methods.

Participants were actively involved in the development of these practices through a hands-on learning approach.

To raise awareness among the community, an extensive multimedia campaign was implemented, encompassing the creation and adaptation of various materials such as flipcharts, technical guides, thematic videos, radio spots, and radio interviews.

The central idea conveyed through these materials emphasized the significance of micro-insurance as a critical measure to tackle the challenges posed by climate change. The training sessions were conducted over a span of four months, with weekly sessions attended by more than 296 participants.

In addition to the farmer training, the LWF provided four trainings to 483 technical and administrative officials at the national level of the Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario agencies and the central headquarters. The main objective was to equip the staff to effectively promote parametric insurance. The trainings covered various topics, including climate change, coping strategies, and the mechanism of risk transfer through parametric microinsurance.

Climate risk transfer

The impact of climate change is evident in the undeniable fact that the world's poorest countries and people, who have contributed the least to the climate crisis, bear the brunt of climate-induced loss and damage.

These adverse impacts **push them further into vulnerability, poverty, and deeper levels of debt**.

> *"This project is a case study where the state takes responsibility for the effects that climate change has on vulnerable populations, and it is part of acknowledging that the issue of losses and damages is not an effect caused by small producers. The theme of climate justice is that those who have contributed the least to climate change are being affected by something they did not cause. And it should be the responsibility of the state to protect them from such events. Moreover, it is a debt of developed countries to developing countries." (Mercedes Palacios, Regional Officer Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change of the Central America Program of LWF)*

The impacts of climate change are distributed unevenly. Disasters have a far more destabilizing impact on less advanced economies. Developing countries are often more geographically exposed to climate-induced hazards, leading to higher socioeconomic vulnerability and limited technical and financial capacity to respond and recover. (Source: Seguros de riesgos climáticos y financiamiento del riesgo en el contexto de la justicia climática, 13)

Consequently, the limits to adaptation become more evident, leaving many communities unable to "**maintain human-ecological systems in a safe operating space**." This exposes them to intolerable risks that threaten their health, safety, well-being, and overall sustainability.

Increased vulnerability to such risks is a fundamental characteristic of poverty, which can result in households and communities being **trapped in a cycle of impoverishment**. Likewise, mass displacement and migration could emerge as the most significant humanitarian challenges in the context of worsening climate change conditions, particularly in regions where livelihoods are severely impacted, and people have **limited options for earning a living**.

The prevention, minimization, and compensation of residual losses and damages that exceed the capacity of

adaptation are becoming increasingly important to avert humanitarian, ecological, and development catastrophes.

These events have enormous potential to undermine peace and stability in the affected regions. To address these challenges, resilience must be enhanced through effective adaptation and **comprehensive climate risk management**.

In this context, faith-based organizations should play a more extensive role in climate risk insurance and financing at both levels: advocacy and programmatic work. They should focus on the needs and specific circumstances of vulnerable communities and how these approaches can **include them and protect them better**.

Local to Global to Local Approach

At the global level, Central America has been actively advocating for addressing the issue of losses and damages resulting from climate change, particularly within the framework of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM).

At the regional level, these instruments involve incorporating the responsibility of countries to provide indemnification, financial support, and risk reduction measures for the most affected sectors, such as the agricultural sector. From the local to the global level, discussions and climate negotiations have taken place involving various communities, including the case of El Salvador.

The primary goal of these discussions has been to ensure that national and international arrangements recognize and incorporate the responsibility of developed countries, in compensating for the losses they have inflicted on developing countries over the past four decades, due to their high-consumption lifestyles and associated emissions.

The incidence at the regional level emphasizes the incorporation of measures to hold the state responsible and accountable for indemnifying, supporting financially, and mitigating risks for the sectors most severely affected by climate change impacts, such as the agricultural sector.

> *"While various organizations are engaged in numberous local projects, their project effectiveness is dependent upon the protective and guaranteeing mechanisms within national and international instruments, which must encompass indemnification and risk transfer for these sectors. Without such safeguards, non-government organizations, like ours, may find themselves continunously implementing similar projects with diminishing impact." (Mercedes Palacios, Regional Officer, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, World Service Central America Programme)*

Target Group

The beneficiaries are located in the departments of San Miguel, La Paz, San Vicente, and Usulután, in El Salvador. The targeted populations are small farmers or daily-wage earners, whose main sources of income are labor and the production of basic grains.

The main objective of the project, concerning the targeted communities, was to support farmers in the transition from traditional agriculture to an agriculture resilient to climate change. From these communities, 75% of small farmers are renting their land and 100% of households headed by women rent land for their crops.

More specifically, the beneficiaries consisted of vulnerable families residing in the dry corridor region, who primarily relied on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods and frequently experienced crop losses and damages.

Additionally, a priority was placed on the participation of female heads of households, and families with migrant or forced-displaced relatives, due to the necessity for alternative livelihoods. The project also sought to involve families with children or individuals with disabilities present in their homes.

Women were given priority, but regrettably, only 15% of the beneficiaries were female due to El Salvador being a patriarchal country, where women generally lack land ownership. Nevertheless, numerous success stories emerged, with women like Patricia Vásquez Granadeño actively involved in empowering others (see below).

Patricia, a member of the Horizontes Nuevos collective in the La Paz department, has been actively involved in the Microclimate Insurance – Pilot Project as a community trainer. Additionally, she is part of a dedicated group of women who cultivate their own home gardens.

Her case is a great illustration of the focus the project has on empowering women.

> *"I enjoy sharing my knowledge with communities, specifically training women in accessing new opportunities and improving their conditions and income. My efforts extend beyond teaching; I also actively raise awareness about the impact of climate change and its negative consequences. Additionally, I balance my responsibilities as a mother and wife with my role as a teacher, all while nurturing my 17-year-old son." (Patricia Vásquez Granadeño, Community Trainer and Member of the Horizontes Nuevos Collective in the La Paz department)*

Impact

1. Two hundred and ninety-four farmers have been directly sensitized on the effects of climate change and how parametric insurance could be a viable option in their context. Project participants now

have a better understanding of the adaptation measures needed for food production and security.

2. Out of the 294 farmers trained, 247 obtained 75% on a post-training test, 114 being women and 133 men. This outcome validates the impact that training had on increasing their awareness.

3. Four hundred and eighty-three staff from the Banco de Fomento Agropecuario have been trained and have the necessary knowledge to promote parametric insurance and support farmers.

Replicability

This pilot project is crucial, not only from a development perspective, but also as a response to slow-onset catastrophes that are more common as global warming approaches 1.5°C. The United Nations Climate Change Conference COP27 agreed to provide "loss and damage" funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters.

"The project should be replicated in every developing country that is suffering the consequences of climate change, especially those with vulnerable communities depending on agriculture. The transfer of responsibility should no longer be negotiable. It should be a state initiative and it should be the national or international authorities that decide who should finance the risks and losses assumed by the agricultural sector.

The agricultural sector has experienced significant hardships in recent years, leading to a decline in the continuation of family planting traditions among young people who are migrating to urban centers or abroad. Even families with a long history of farming have been compelled to abandon their fields after facing repeated crop losses due to climate change.

Consequently, this has resulted in reduced local production and a greater reliance on imports, exacerbating the destabilization of the territorial organization. To address these pressing challenges, the implementation of the project in vulnerable developing countries is paramount, ensuring sustainable agricultural practices and curbing the migration of rural populations to urban areas and abroad." (Mercedes Palacios, Regional Officer Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, World Service Central America Programme)

Sustainability

The project implemented several monitoring strategies, including conducting periodic virtual follow-up meetings between the Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario management staff and the LWF technical and management team, along with providing commitment reports to streamline processes.

Monthly visits were made to the two Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario agencies in Zacatecoluca and Usulután, and interviews were held with managers to assess progress in credit placement and program adjustments.

Additionally, joint field visits were organized with Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario advisors to microcredit user producers in all project areas, providing valuable insight. The project also offered accompaniment and periodic support to the technical trainers of the project, to enhance the effectiveness of training efforts.

> *"However, the project will continue without the LWF subsidizing anything. In fact, the Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario started this initiative in 2018 on its own. We have strengthened their capacities and we have shown them the importance of taking climate change seriously as a company, pointing out that they are protagonists in reducing the impact in the sector, so they own the initiative, and they take seriously the job of ensuring food security." (Mercedes Palacios, Regional Officer Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, World Service Central America Program)*

Furthermore, the project has effectively coordinated with other relevant actors in the region. For instance, it has been included as part of the rural development strategy implemented by the government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and the Centre for Agricultural and Forestry Technological Development (CENTA).

This collaboration includes joint efforts with the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations** (FAO) to promote climate adaptation interventions and the adoption of agroecological approaches to production.

Additionally, the project manages weather alerts in conjunction with the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources through the environmental observatory. Moreover, it coordinates with municipal governments to complement support actions for small producers.

Another indicator of the internalization of parametric insurance by the BFA is the provision of two sensitization sessions for technical and administrative officials of the Banco Nacional de Fomento Agropecuario.

After 18 months of joint execution, it can be confidently stated that at least the two agencies participating in the project, Zacatecoluca and Usulután, have developed a greater capacity to comprehend and manage parametric insurance independently.

ETHIOPIA: Kebribeyah Sustainable Livelihood Project

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 900,000 Icelandic Church Aid and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland

IMPLEMENTATION

The Lutheran World Federation, Ethiopia World Sevice Country Program

SNAPSHOT

The Kebribeyah Sustainable Livelihood Project was desgined to address adaptation and mitigation to climate change. The project focused on several water, health, and sanitation areas, such as awareness sessions, latrine and birka in-

stallation. The project has increased agricultural productivity, benefiting nearly 1,000 farming households, and promoted environmental sustainability through the adoption of appropriate technologies. It has empowered women, expanded access to water and sanitation, and promoted the production of environmentally friendly household energy sources.

In an arid climate zone, with a high population proportion being agropastoralists who rely mainly on livestock and agriculture, the project was highly relevant as it focused on inhibiting further degradation of the local ecosystem, restoring the overall ecological conditions of the area, and increasing the resilience and adaptive capacity of the targeted communities in Kebribeyah District, Fafan Zone, in the Somali region.

Its main objectives were:

1. To achieve food security among vulnerable target households through the promotion of improved and eco-friendly agricultural technologies, such as sustainable natural resources conservation (NRC).

2. To empower women to have their own businesses and become less dependent on agriculture, *"so they depend less on the rain and are less affected by climate hazards." (Ibrahim Abdelkadir, Senior Program Officer for Food Security and Livelihoods, The Lutheran World Federation Ethiopia).*

3. To reduce incidences of waterborne diseases among the target households.

Context

The Somali region falls into the arid and semiarid agroecological climatic zone. It is one of the four regions of Ethiopia, and it is considered as the least developed of the country. It is also the most vulnerable region to drought effects due to the dominantly arid and semiarid agroecology and it is characterized by erratic and unreliable rainfalls.

The predominant livestock economy depends mainly upon herding with a primary stock of camels, flocks of sheep, goats, and cattle coupled with crop production in some parts of the area where conditions are favorable.

Due to the inability to attain food self-sufficiency, a large part of the region's population is perennially dependent on relief assistance. Although most of the people of the region mainly earn their livelihood from livestock, they practice crop production as well.

The major crops cultivated in the region are sorghum and maize. Wheat and barley are also harvested in a smaller amount each year. Commercial activity is another occupation that is significantly exercised in the region.

Inadequate basic infrastructures and external factors such as drought constitute formidable constraints for the region. Low and erratic bimodal rainfall and generally high temperatures are the other characteristics of the region that have contributed to the widespread shortage of water in the region as a whole.

The region in general is characterized by chronic food insecurity problems as almost all of the districts are covered by the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and food aid programs.

Eighty percent of the people in the Kebribeyah district are agropastoralists and depend, in addition to livestock, on farming activities from maize, sorghum, and wheat. Additionally, onion, tomato, and watermelon are the major fruit and vegetables produced in the district. However, according to the district administrator, as the farming is rain-irrigatedfed, the sector is frequently hit by the recurring drought and the production drops continuously from year to year.

Animal disease outbreak, which is very common in the area, is the other bottleneck for the development of the subsector. The subsector in the district is characterized by a high prevalence of livestock disease and inadequate veterinary services.

Currently, although there are Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) assigned in each of the six target kebeles (at least two in each), their services are not visible, as reported by the focus group discussion participants, and the major constraint behind is that they have a critical shortage of drugs and essential treatment equipment. Animal disease has numerous negative impacts in the area including a reduction in the productivity of herds due to increased death of animals, weight loss, and retarding growth.

Erosion and gullies are the most common environmental challenges that the community faces when practicing farming and the community indicated that their knowledge of environmental protection and management is very limited. The rural open lands are covered by shrubs and bushes that usually wither during the dry season in the absence of rain.

According to the needs assessment, tree planting is not at all practiced in the district both due to low awareness level about the relation between trees and the environment and also because of an absence of tree seedlings.

The predominantly agropastoralist rural people of the district rely mainly on birkas (ponds) for water. The boreholes are found around towns and water supply is always a concern for the district population mainly because it depends on the rain.

As drought is a common phenomenon in the district, water scarcity becomes the most critical problem during dry seasons and is exacerbated during drought, affecting mainly the agricultural sector that practices rain-fed agriculture, as is the case in the six targeted kebeles.

Although it is difficult to back up with clinical data due to the absence of information, the community responses indicated that waterborne diseases are common in rural areas and the application of water treatment chemicals is almost non-existent due to both low awareness levels and limited access.

The district's average water supply coverage is reported to be 61% which also took account of surface water harvesting structures that are not safe. So, it is easy to generalize that the safe water supply coverage of the district is much lower than what is reported by the district water, mineral, and energy office.

Strategies

Community education, sensitization, and capacity-strengthening for adaptation and resilience

The project intervention focused mainly on serving natural vegetation and trying to train the community in doing more conservation practices, conservation techniques, conserving land, and improving their farming skills and water harvesting.

To introduce post-harvest technology and to minimize the losses after harvest, the project procured eight motorized maize shellers and provided them to eight groups in seven kebeles on revolving funds. Each group, consisting of 20 members (including both men and women), provided later the service to other farmers, and the income was used for repayment.

Likewise, and to minimize open defecation in the kebeles, the project constructed nine dry pit latrines in Hare, Gumer, Kebrihanten, Duriya, and other kebeles for communal use. Part of the pit excavation was carried out with community participation. Open defecation has a profound impact on various aspects, including land, water, air, plants, and animals.

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The odors emitted during this process contribute to air pollution, affecting people's health when they breathe them in. Moreover, it has detrimental effects on the environment as it introduces toxins and bacteria into the ecosystem beyond its capacity to handle or decompose. Consequently, this leads to the accumulation of filth, and the excessive presence of microbes can eventually reach aquatic systems, posing a threat to life.

A women-savings and credit associations group was established, where women were supported by experts in developing their own business plans and receiving a loan. Beneficiaries were expected to repay the borrowed amount, ideally within one year, and the repaid funds were then passed on to another beneficiary.

> *"It is important to note that the most adversely affected by climate change are women. When a natural disaster occurs, men often leave first, leaving women behind." (Ibrahim Abdelkadir, Senior Program Officer for Food Security and Livelihoods, The Lutheran World Federation Ethiopia).*

This loan system significantly enhanced the economic and social status of women and has been

> *"a good way of climate impact mitigation, as women have been engaged in business and off-farm activities, so they depend less on the rain and are less affected by climate hazards. Moreover, they have been trained in the benefits of using fuel-saving stoves and enhanced their capacities in stove-making, using local materials like termite mound soil, which, as mentioned above, have impacts in CO2 reduction." (Ibrahim Abdelkadir, Senior Program Officer for Food Security and Livelihoods, The Lutheran World Federation Ethiopia).*

Similarly, the project planned and organized a farmer's field day on soil conservation and agroforestry practices, and improved poultry production on model farms. The field day was organized in collaboration with the Somali Regional Research Institute. The second field day was held at the demonstration site in the Fafan research center, where 77 people (67 male and 10 female) participated in the event, comprising 60 farmers and 17 government sector office staff.

Finally, three three-day trainings on natural resources protection, conservation practices, management, and control measure techniques were provided to 170 people (129 men and 41 women) in collaboration with the district agriculture office.

Biodiversity conservation

Several soil and water conservation methods were introduced to combat land degradation, such as soil bund, which, "**according to WFP (2005), is effective in controlling soil loss, retaining moisture, and ultimately enhancing the productivity of land**," cut off the drain, and land closure.

> *"For developing nations, soil erosion is among the most chronic environmental and economic burdens. The rates of soil erosion in Ethiopia are frighteningly high. Serious erosion is estimated to have affected 25% of the highland area. Close to 4% of the highlands are now so seriously eroded that they will not be economically productive again in the foreseeable future." (**Source: Damtew, Maru, and Adane, "Determinants of Adopting Techniques of Soil and Water Conservation," 196**).*

During the project, 5.7km of soil bunds or terracing to minimize water erosion have been built in Hare and Kebrihantin kebeles with the participation of 82 farmers, and two kilometers in Duriya, where 57 farmers, of which 15 were female, participated. In Ethiopia, soil erosion is considered a critical constraint for land resource productivity.

Following a top-down approach, soil water managing methods have been promoted according to the land's physical restrictions and erosion hazards. These interventions, often implemented at the water catchment level, are intended to promote community labor mobilization.

In recent years, climate-smart agriculture has arisen as an approach whose objective is to combine climate change into the planning and implementation of sustainable agricultural tactics.

On the other hand, contour bunds are a simple agronomic measure that consists of plowing and planting across the field slope so that it matches contour lines.

The procedure does not lead to modifications in the slope profile and **can be repeated each cropping season**. Despite novel research conducted in Ethiopia providing evidence that terraces have a bigger potential to help farmers deal with current climate risks, it also highlights the **positive effect of contour bunds on water utilization and soil conservation**.

Moreover, the project constructed 126 m3 of cut-off drain in Duriya and Hare kebeles, with around 86 community members, of which 22 were women. The farmers constructed these drains to prevent the loss of seeds, fertilizers, manure, and soil due to water flowing onto the plot from uphill, as the excess water is disposed away from the field.

Furthermore, in consultation with the target community selected, the project delineated and enclosed four hectares of degraded and marginalized land in Hare, Gumer, and Duriya kebeles.

This practice aimed to inhibit further degradation of the local ecosystem, advance revegetation and forest regeneration, and restore the overall ecological conditions of the area. This was done by the area closure from interference and damage by both humans and animals to allow for the natural regeneration of the land.

Finally, 15 groups comprising 150 members (16 men and 134 women) were organized, trained, and equipped with materials for producing fuel-saving stoves, namely, molds, shovels, spoons, and jerrycans.

> *"Research has shown that compared with the traditional open fire tripod, fuel saving stoves could reduce household's fuelwood consumptions, which could translate into potential emissions reductions of CO2." (Source: **Yibeltal T. Wassie and Muyiwa S. Adaramola, "Analysis of Potential Fuel Savings, Economic and Environmental Effects of Improved Biomass Cookstoves in Rural Ethiopia," Journal of Cleaner Production 280, Part 1 (2021).**)*

Local to Global to Local Approach

"We collaborate closely with local and district-level government authorities. In response to the ever-changing dynamics of climate change, we actively seek knowledge from other institutions to continually update our techniques. An example is our experiences and knowledge exchange with various stakeholders within the country to foster continuous improvement and progress in our initiatives.

Communities have their own approaches to implementing water harvesting structures and rural dig ponds. Our objective is to enhance these methods by incorporating local, national, and international techniques to ensure they are more hygienic and efficient. In other words, while we strive to introduce innovative solutions, we also value and preserve local knowledge, considering the perspectives of the communities we work with. We believe in harmonizing both local and international knowledge to develop effective solutions." (Ibrahim Abdelkadir, Senior Program Officer for Food Security and Livelihoods)

Target Group

In Ethiopia, children under 11 years of age account for about 40% of the total population while nearly 60% of the population is younger than 24 years old. As a direct consequence, the project's beneficiaries were mainly youth.

It focused on the communities of six kebeles: Kotonroble, Gomar, Hare, Duriya, Egatow, and Kebrihanten. There was a total of 9,958 households living in the selected kebeles, of which 797 were headed by women.

Additionally, as mentioned above, women were specifically considered and they benefited from the credit association groups where they received training and support from experts and loans for opening their own businesses.

Impact

1. Increased agricultural productivity denotes enhanced income and improved access to food among 995 farmer households, with 772 male-headed and 223 women-headed households.

2. A total of 110 households, including 62 male-headed and 48 women-headed households, have adopted appropriate and sustainable NRC technologies and practices for enhanced environmental rehabilitation.

3. Eighty targeted women have experienced social and economic empowerment through expanded access to economic resources and skills.

4. Enhanced access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) has been extended to 2,860 households, comprising 1,445 male-headed and 1,415 women-headed households.

5. Thirty households, consisting of four male-headed and 26 female-headed households, are utilizing newly acquired skills and materials to produce environmentally friendly household energy sources, particularly energy-saving stoves.

6. Land in the targeted areas has been improved and rehabilitated through biological SC practices. For example, in one hectare of land, 60m3 of cut-off drain and 20m3 of stone check dam have been constructed on communal land in Hare and Duriya kebeles to combat soil erosion.

7. Twenty percent of the trained farmers have begun implementing soil conservation measures on their farm plots.

8. Around 50 women have become involved in independent business activities.

9. Construction of three small ponds (in Hare, Gumer, and Duriya kebeles) has provided water access to 32,500 people and over 5,000 animals for five months during the dry season. Additionally, one earthen pond with a water-holding capacity of 24,000m3 has been built in Kebrihantin, serving more than 25,500 people and their livestock in the village.

10. Organization of six village water committees, one in each project kebele, has facilitated the management of water scheme structures built by the project and individuals. Each committee comprises seven members, including three women.

Replicability

The project implemented resilient seeds that not only led to higher production but also provided revenue opportunities for families to sell at the market. This cost-effective and readily reproducible approach to addressing rain irregularities safeguarded the fundamental rights and livelihoods of the producers who had been impacted by climate effects.

The project focused on several water, health, and sanitation areas, such as awareness sessions and latrine and birka installation. These initiatives tackled common behavioral practices and resulted in improved living conditions, through improved basic hygiene and waste management.

These accomplishments emphasize how focusing on basic needs can result in simple, cost-effective results that generate significant positive impacts.

Empowering beneficiaries to manage the planned project activities and formation of good relationships with societies enhanced the communities' sense of ownership and created a smooth implementation process for project livelihood activities, which is otherwise a significant challenge in externally funded projects.

A significant number of climate internal displaced persons (IDPs) were identified, who were forced to migrate in search of water and food due to the adverse impacts of climate change.

For these vulnerable populations, refugee camps have become synonymous with deplorable living conditions and dire livelihood circumstances. Therefore, this project offers a promising solution that extends beyond enhancing educational opportunities as it seeks to improve overall living conditions within these camps.

Its successful implementation in such contexts could serve as a replicable model for addressing both educational access and general living conditions, potentially bringing about positive change for countless refugees worldwide.

Sustainability

"The communities have been engaged in all project activities from need identification through planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. For all the activities that we implemented, we counted on the monitoring of a community committee. For example, after a group harvest, the selected group needed to transfer a set number of seeds to a second beneficiary group. In this scenario, the role of the agricultural committee was to ensure the accountability and control of this process, so that the activity continues the cycle.

For the area enclosure to preserve soil and water, there is a watershed committee, composed of seven members, preferably gender balanced. The committee was trained and prepared a bylaw, stating that, i.e., if any outsider violates the rule, such as allowing animals to enter the closed area or outsiders damaging the structures or the plantations, then they would enforce fines and penalties.

We have done a lot of water harvesting. There are rules to make it a sustainable way to avoid polluting the water, so, each beneficiary must comply with the norms enforced by the watershed committee. The committees take ownership and enforce the sustainability." (Ibrahim Abedelkadi, Senior Program Officer for Food Security and Livelihoods)

On the other hand, the design of the project was carried out based on the felt needs of the community and considered the status of knowledge and skills among the beneficiaries. The technological choices, therefore, were made based on the objective realities of the area and in the light of experiences accumulated from previous interventions.

Moreover, the activities of the project also fell within the guidelines of the government development policy, which was favorable for soliciting government cooperation and support.

The exit strategy focused mainly on strengthening and capacitating the community institutions and committees. Participation of the community and government organs ensured the handover of responsibilities to the other stakeholders after the project's completion.

INDONESIA: Encouraging Spiritual Awareness of Lutheran City Forest

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

July to October 2021

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 1,998, The Lutheran World Federation

SNAPSHOT

The initiative addressed adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy. Throughout the project, Indonesia's vulnerability to climate change was evident, with hydro-hazards and extreme weather events causing significant damage and loss of life. Driven by faith and spirituality, a city forest was established in Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra, Indonesia, initiated by the National Committee of Lutheran World Federation in Indonesia and support from the LWF.

IMPLEMENTATION

National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation in Indonesia (KN-LWF Indonesia)

The project was extremely relevant within the context as it addressed adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy through the following activities:

1. the establishment of a climate hut for youth to learn about climate change;

2. theologically based education workshops on the climate and environment;

3. involvement of youth in landscaping and tree planting activities, transforming unfertile land into productive areas; and

4. impactful climate change advocacy campaigns through social media platforms.

The project achieved significant milestones in the pursuit of climate justice. Through the workshop, 70 Christian youths were empowered as advocates and campaigners for climate justice.

The LWF National Committee in Indonesia (KNLWF) selected and collaborated with one of the Member Churches youth, Nazareth Nababan, a theological student from Pematang Siantar, to lead this project.

The workshop equipped participants with a comprehensive understanding of climate and environmental issues, as well as essential campaigning skills.

A crucial aspect of the project was the development of the Lutheran City Forest (LCF) located in Pematangsiantar, Indonesia.

The team engaged in landscaping and tree planting activities, transforming 500 m^2 of dry land into fertile soil. Although limited to 30 participants due to COVID-19 restrictions, the initiative made a notable impact on environmental conservation efforts.

"Driven by faith and spirituality, a city forest was established in Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra, Indonesia, initiated by the National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation in Indonesia and support from the LWF." (KNLWF)

Recognizing the power of digital platforms, the project launched an impactful climate change campaign on social media. With creative content messages, the

campaign reached over 4,000 individuals across various social media platforms, amplifying the youth-led advocacy efforts.

To foster continued engagement, the KNLWF established a Lutheran Climate Post, a dedicated meeting point for discussions and learning on climate actions.

Overall, the project's achievements stand as a testament to the dedication and passion of the KNLWF and its participants in advancing climate justice in the region.

The project has succeeded in making strides in creating a more sustainable and climate-resilient future, empowering the youth, transforming land, spreading awareness, and fostering dialogue within the impacted communities.

Context

Indonesia is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including extreme events such as floods and droughts, as well as long-term changes from sea level rise, shifts in rainfall patterns, and increasing temperatures.

Despite experiencing rapid economic growth and a reduction in poverty over the years (**the poverty rate halving from 23% in 1999 to 9.5% in 2022**), the country's susceptibility is due to high population density in hazard-prone areas and heavy reliance on its natural resource base. As a result, Indonesia faces significant risks from projected climate variability and change.

The effects of climate change are expected to have severe consequences for Indonesia's agricultural sector. Higher temperatures may reduce rice crop yields, and overall agricultural production faces multiple threats, impacting food security in the country.

In addition to agricultural challenges, climate change is likely to affect water availability, impacting disaster risk management, with urban development (particularly in coastal zones) and health and nutrition issues potentially exacerbating poverty and inequality.

With a ranking in the top third of countries in terms of climate risk, Indonesia is highly exposed to various types of flooding and extreme heat. As the climate continues to change, the intensity of these hazards is expected to grow. Without effective adaptation measures, **the population's exposure to these risks will also increase**.

> *"The National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation of Indonesia firmly believes that churches in Indonesia, as part of global faith-based organizations, have a spiritual responsibility to God in ensuring the integration of creation through climate justice actions."* **(Click here to watch on YouTube).**

The KNLWF also emphasizes that youth are crucial actors who should raise their voices and lead climate justice actions. With their digital reach, the participation of youth plays a pivotal role in enhancing Indonesia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to combat climate change.

Furthermore, this project aimed to encourage member churches of the KNLWF to actively participate and engage with local-national-global faith-based organizations in their efforts to address climate change. As part of this ambition Lutheran City Forest was born.

Strategies

Community education, sensitization and capacity-strengthening

The project established a climate shelter, a small 24m2 house serving as a meeting place for youth to learn about climate change. The Climate Hut, also known as the Lutheran Climate Post, functions as a multifunctional hub, providing space for youths and stakeholders to receive comprehensive workshops and education from experts and environmental advocates, empowering them with knowledge and tools to become climate advocates.

Biodiversity conservation and restoration of ecosystems

The Lutheran City Forest exemplifies environmental conservation and reforestation efforts. Thanks to youth engaged in landscaping and tree planting activities, the project transformed barren land into fertile areas, restoring green spaces, and fostering ecological balance. Preceded by theologically-based educational workshops on climate and environment, the project emphasized community ownership and took practical steps to engage participants in empowering climate-related activities.

The Lutheran City Forest stands as a symbol of the community's commitment to combat climate change and build climate-resilient ecosystems, contributing to climate environmental restoration efforts.

Advocacy

> *"For advocacy, we campaigned through social media, particularly through Facebook and Instagram. We did 20 social media campaigns and, as a result, we were able to reach 4,000 people in total." (Berkatdo Saragih, Program Officer and Dedi Pardosi, Director of KNLWF).*

The project conducted impactful climate change advocacy campaigns through social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram. Utilizing creative content and intent-driven messages, these campaigns were initiated by youth, who promoted climate justice themes for over two weeks, spreading climate change awareness, and inspiring collective action.

The borderless nature of digital platforms enabled the project to transcend geographical boundaries, making climate advocacy accessible to a larger population, including rural regions.

The campaign's success was measured by its reach and engagement, amplifying the project's impact on climate awareness and fostering a sense of urgency for climate action.

Local to Global to Local Approach

The project followed the L2G2L approach, aligning its campaign with Indonesia's Nationally Determined Contribution for 2030 and raising awareness and education about the impact that Indonesia uniquely faces.

> *"On April 4, 2021, the extreme weather caused by the Tropical Cyclone Seroja triggered natural disasters in a number of areas in East Nusa Tenggara and West Nusa Tenggara province in Indonesia. As a result, [there were] hundreds of casualties and properties fell. The death toll reached 169 people. This has never happened before. The extreme weather that triggered natural disasters was spread evenly in other areas of Indonesia, particularly in Sumatra and Java." (Project Report, An Initiation in Encouraging the Spiritual Awareness of Lutheran Youth on Climate Justice through the Establishment of Lutheran City Forest).*

The initiative effectively harnessed the contributions of Lutheran Christian youths, drawing on their faith-based perspectives to support the (NDC) target. It highlighted the pivotal role of the church in taking meaningful action to address climate change.

By empowering the youth and engaging local stakeholders in workshops and activities, the initiative aimed to foster a sense of ownership, responsibility, and collaboration. This collective effort served as a catalyst for building a proactive future, both for the communities involved and in addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

Target Group

The directly targeted group consisted of 80 Lutheran Christian youths, including students from theological college (30 people), university (30 people), and high school (20 people). Nazareth Nababan, a theological student from Pematang Siantar, coordinated the project. The project indirectly reached a further 4,000 people through social media campaigns.

Impact

1. Identification of the KNLWF as a nationally recognized advocate for climate justice.

2. Through a comprehensive workshop, 70 Christian youth became empowered advocates and campaigners, equipped with a deeper understanding of climate issues and essential campaigning skills.

3. The development of the Lutheran City Forest transformed 500m2 of dry land into fertile soil, making a notable contribution to environmental conservation efforts.

4. The impactful social media campaign reached over 4,000 individuals, amplifying youth-led advocacy efforts, and raising climate change awareness.

5. The establishment of the Lutheran Climate Post fostered ongoing engagement and strengthened the collective commitment to addressing climate challenges.

6. The project's success highlighted the pivotal role of youth in climate action and their ability to utilize digital platforms to lead impactful climate justice actions.

Replicability

The thorough social media planning included continuous posting for 20 days, using engaging pictures and videos. Highlighting the tree-planting aspect was essential to achieve engagement and demonstrate the project's impact.

The project identified the challenge of converting online engagement into tangible action on the ground. They further shared their campaign with the Lutheran study center to inspire others to take real action against climate change.

The success with social media and sharing experiences demonstrate the project's replicable approach for meaningful climate advocacy and action, encouraging collaboration for a significant impact.

"In our project, a strong social media campaign was a key part of our climate advocacy efforts, aiming to spread the message far and wide. We shared our knowledge and experiences with other projects and regions to showcase our effective outreach." (Berkatdo Saragih, Program Officer and Dedi Pardosi, Director of KNLWF).

Sustainability

The project's sustainability centered around the climate advocacy workshops and the climate hut, serving as a dedicated meeting point for learning and discussions on climate change. The project implementors believe in the power of collective sharing and dialogue to ignite the climate justice movement through empowered youth.

Encouraging the involvement of the local government in Indonesia has proven challenging for the project, due to bureaucratic barriers and other priorities above that of climate change. However, the project effectively showcased positive and sustainable action by adopting a proactive approach.

Throughout the entire process, the project emphasized consistent communication, both prior to and during implementation, and continued engagement even after completion with the government figures. The overarching aim was to raise awareness and demonstrate a positive impact on climate justice initiatives in the region.

The project achieved success in engaging youth from the Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP), The Indonesian Christian Church (HKI), and Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI). However, to ensure long-term sustainability and meaningful impact, the project acknowledged the significance of overcoming challenges related to participant numbers and their level of interest in climate change.

The project's effective engagement of youth proved crucial in making the social media campaign more successful than anticipated, reaching a wide audience.

For future efforts, the project identified that a focus should be placed on raising awareness and promoting knowledge-sharing within local churches. This approach would foster a more inclusive and well-informed climate justice movement, building a foundation for enduring engagement and positive change in the fight against climate change.

KENYA:
Provision of Renewable Energy Systems and Electronic Learning Devices to Schools in Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

August 2018 to December 2020

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 2,131,800, Bread for the World

IMPLEMENTATION

The Lutheran World Federation

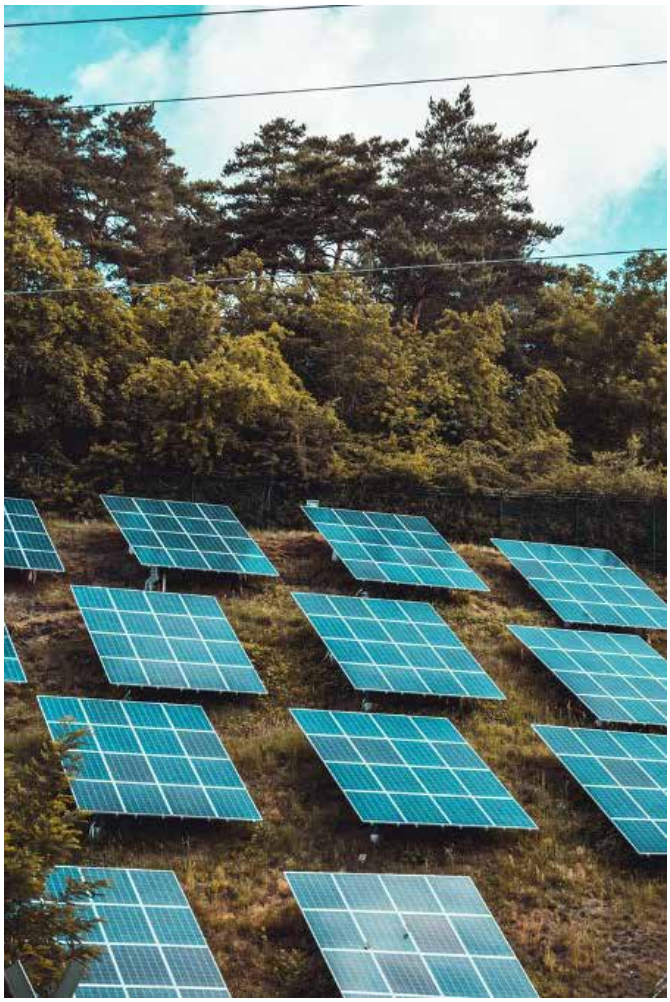
SNAPSHOT

The project succesfully extended electriciy access to 45 schools in the refugee camps and local community, improving essential services such as lighting, equipment operation, and ventilation for better student engagement, replacing unsustainable generator power previously relied upon due to lack of grid electricity. The provision of renewable energy systems and electronic learning devices to schools in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps is designed to address adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy. Kenyan Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps receive a vast influx of refugees from neighboring countries like South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia. These camps face challenges due to a lack of electricy in most schools, as they are not connected to the national power grid.

This project is highly relevant as it pioneers a greening of the humanitarian sector, with a focus on leveraging technology to provide renewable power and electronic learning resources in the camp and local community schools.

Moreover, the project encouraged sustainable practices such as tree planting and implemented e-learning to reduce the consumption of 10,000 textbooks, reducing the demand for paper and avoiding tree cutting.

This approach is also relevant in this scenario, as the refugee camps are in a semi-arid area and the communities rely heavily on timber for cooking and construction, which is unsustainable and a major concern for the government, who hasve considered closing the camps for to mitigate this.



The LWF implemented this project in Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps, where access to power was limited, and provided solar power for 45 schools. This initiative aimed to offer lighting, ventilation, and access to e-learning and social media platforms for students.

The LWF also introduced KIO kits, the ready-to-use digital education toolboxes, designed for schools in low-income communities in primarily emerging markets. This technology functions offline and serves as internet hotspots, enhancing the learning experience in Kakuma Refugee Camp.

The kits come packed with 40 Kio tablets, preloaded with engaging educational content divided into three key sections: academic content aligned to the local curriculum, games that stimulate critical thinking, and content focused on responsible citizenship and environmental conservation. Each case offers storage and charging for the tablets.

KIO tablets are locked to prevent theft and ensure digital child safety. The learners have their own devices, and there is a master device for teachers that can be used to initiate learning and control the learners during the lesson.

The tablets are ruggedized to reduce breakage, have sufficient battery life for intermittent power, and are locked to prevent theft and ensure child safety.

Through solarization, the project sought to enhance computer-assisted teaching methods in classrooms, improve access to educational content through open educational resources, and enable learners and teachers to access materials on tablets and laptops. This included curricula designs, lesson audio, and animated videos to enhance the teaching of science subjects.

During the implementation of the project, 45 primary schools in Kakuma and Dadaab benefited from improved physical security and learning conditions. Security lights were erected in schools and staff compounds, significantly reducing theft and vandalism as all previously dark areas were illuminated.

Solar power installations at staff accommodations and offices not only bolstered security but also provided a conducive environment for learning and working. The installation not only reduced the cost of providing energy but also lessened the burden on the generators and decreased emissions resulting from the use of fossil fuels.

Furthermore, ventilation fans were strategically installed in classrooms wherever feasible, vastly enhancing the learning conditions for students during hot days. The entire initiative proved to be a crucial step toward improving education and fostering a better learning environment for refugee students in the camps.

Context

The political stability in Kenya stands in stark contrast to neighboring countries like South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia, resulting in a considerable influx of asylum seekers into Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps. The LWF has been providing primary education services in Dadaab since 2010 and in Kakuma since 1992, but there are still significant challenges due to a lack of electricity and reliance on unsustainable alternatives.

A further challenge that is faced by refugee camps is their sustainability and impact on the local communities. In the context of humanitarian support in refugee camps, addressing infrastructure challenges is crucial to ensuring the well-being and development of the displaced population. Innovation is needed to mitigate these impacts and optimize the use of limited resources.

As a result of the current energy situation in Dadaab Refugee Camps, renewable energy sources have emerged as a vital pathway to ensuring the sustainability of refugee camps, their schools, and other essential services.

Tensions and conflicts between refugees and the local community within the camps are multifaceted and influenced by various factors. The host community's perception of refugees as economically privileged due to the aid received from organizations fosters resentment and adds to the strain between the two groups.

Population imbalances, with the refugee population outweighing the host community, exacerbate fear and tension among the locals. Moreover, competition over limited resources such as land, water, and wood in the semiarid area further aggravates the challenges faced by both refugees and the local community.

To ensure long-term sustainability and effective resource utilization in refugee camps, inclusive community engagement plays a pivotal role.

Collaborative efforts between aid organizations, local communities, and refugees are essential in addressing infrastructure challenges and fostering positive social impacts. By encouraging understanding, empathy, and cooperation, inclusive community engagement can mitigate tensions and promote a sense of shared responsibility in managing resources and enhancing the well-being of all stakeholders.

Enhancing humanitarian support in Kenyan refugee camps necessitates innovative and sustainable solutions to address infrastructure challenges effectively. Emphasizing renewable energy development and fostering inclusive community engagement are crucial steps toward creating a supportive and resilient environment for both refugees and the local community.

By working together, aid organizations, local communities, and refugees can contribute to a more sustainable and harmonious coexistence in the camps, thereby ensuring a brighter future for those seeking refuge in Kenya.

Strategies

Biodiversity conservation, restoring ecosystems, community education and sensitization

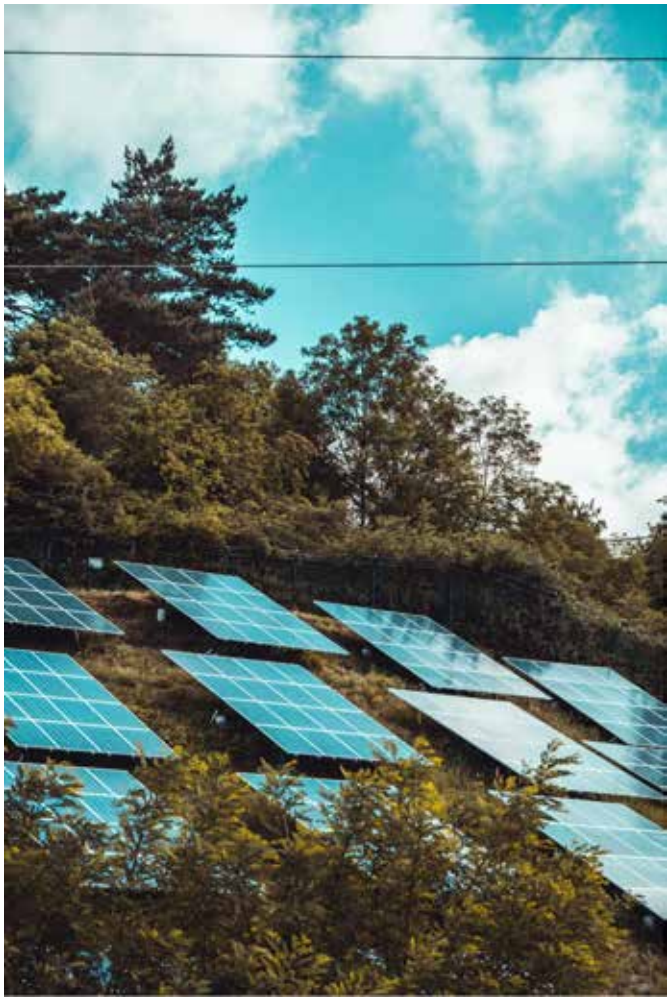
The project proactively addressed the semi-arid area's challenges by exploring ways to reduce the community's heavy reliance on wood and timber for cooking and construction. Instead of an immediate ban on wood usage, the project focused on behavioral change, advocating for sustainable practices such as planting multiple trees for each one felled, thereby creating an exponential curve toward a greener future.

"This highly relevant project gains significance as it addresses environmental conservation concerns and works toward sustainability, particularly in light of the Kenyan government's consideration to close the refugee camp." (Lilian Kantai, Technical Advisor for Advocacy and Human Rights, Lutheran World Federation Kenya)

This approach not only reduced deforestation and its impact on the environment, contributing to climate change mitigation, but also enhanced ecosystem resilience and fostered a healthier environment for the communities, supporting climate change adaptation.

The positive results of this initiative influenced perspectives at different levels, with the community and relevant authorities recognizing the potential for a more sustainable and climate-resilient environment in the area.

Moreover, the project took an innovative approach to education by eliminating its reliance on paper-based textbooks, mitigating the purchase of 10,000 books instead of e-learning resources, reducing the demand for paper, reducing wastage, and avoiding tree cutting. By using digital learning programs and minimizing the use of traditional textbooks and printing, the project promoted environmental-friendly practices in education, contributing to climate change mitigation efforts.



Climate technologies

The installation of solar energy in schools improved learning conditions through enhanced security, lighting, fanning, and ventilation. As a result, learners experienced improved concentration during afternoon lessons, addressing climate change adaptation by helping students cope with extreme temperatures.

Solar energy is pivotal in combating climate change due to its significant reduction of carbon footprints. By harnessing solar power, reliance on fossil fuels diminishes, leading to decreased carbon emissions.

Despite initial upfront costs, the transition offers long-term benefits, including reduced production costs, cleaner air, and improved health and well-being. Moreover, solar energy is adaptable, making it a flexible solution in areas lacking main energy supplies.

"To enhance the smooth running of school devices, the project recommended long-lasting backup batteries, good inverters, and frequent maintenance of solar systems. Upgrading to more modern solar panels was also advised to

achieve greater energy savings and efficiently handle the region's diverse climatic changes." (Collins Omundu, Education Officer, Lutheran World Federation Kenya).

Local to Global to Local

The LWF Kenya-Somalia Program has adopted key elements of the L2G2L in its climate change advocacy efforts, contributing positively to local, national, and global initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The program prioritizes addressing local realities while supporting broader climate change initiatives.

The project aimed to ensure that the county-level government implemented policies and budgetary allocations that address climate change, particularly in areas like Kakuma and Dadaab that are highly impacted by climate-related challenges such as flooding, droughts, and other environmental issues.

The country program contributed to a loss-and-damage paper that highlighted the effects of climate change on the community's livelihood and further engaged in advocacy efforts to promote mitigation and adaptation strategies. This project aimed to also address the impact of climate change on various aspects of the community, including livelihoods, protection, education, sexual and gender-based violence, and deforestation.

By linking climate change to these crucial areas, the program interventions continue to foster a deeper understanding among the community and state operators.

On the national level, the project contributed to the national development plan by aligning its objectives with the country's efforts to address climate change.

By emphasizing the effects of climate change on education and other critical sectors, the project aimed to raise awareness and ensure that the government integrates climate change considerations into its policies, plans, and systems.

Furthermore, the project also had potential for advocacy at various levels, including county, national, regional, and global. It sought to push not only the agencies involved but also the government to develop and implement policies and plans that effectively address climate change issues. The project recognized the importance of international frameworks and resolutions, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Gender-Based Frameworks, and United Nations (UN) resolutions, which play a crucial role in promoting global cooperation and action on climate change, peace, and other related issues.

By taking a comprehensive approach considering a local context, national interests, and efforts, and engaging with international frameworks, the project aimed to create meaningful change and address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change in the targeted communities.

Target Group

The completed project had multiple beneficiaries, including directly with refugee learners, teachers, and staff, directly and indirectly through refugee households and host communities.

Within Kakuma, 35,863 males and 23,974 females directly benefited, with 39,121 males and 22,792 females indirectly. Within Kakuma, 35,863 males and 23,974 females directly benefited, with 3,887 males and 3,310 females indirectly. Within Dadaab 39,121 males and 22,792 females, with 12,500 males and 11,500 females indirectly.

With the provision of solar energy, 36,290 primary school students in 45 schools directly benefited from access to e-learning resources. Further, 740 e-learning devices were distributed to grade one to three students, and 86 teachers in Kakuma and Dadaab received training and teaching devices, empowering them to use educational technology effectively.

In terms of physical security and improved learning conditions, 86,591 primary school students, teachers, and staff in Kakuma and Dadaab experienced enhanced lighting, fanning, and ventilation, fostering a conducive learning environment.

Additionally, the installation of solar-powered lights in the schools improved security for both the school communities and the surrounding households, contributing to a safer educational environment. Refugee camp communities and staff in Nadapal Transit Center also benefited from solar equipment installations, which provided reliable lighting and power usage for various needs. Overall, the successful implementation of the project positively impacted primary school students, teachers, and refugee communities in both Kakuma and Dadaab.

Impact

1. Installed solar energy power, directly benefiting over 86,000 pupils, teachers, and staff in 45 schools, including 2 local community schools, building climate resilience education, and fostering good relations between refugees and local communities.

2. Boosted the local economy by supporting local businesses through the generation of a solar market, with an increased need for solar equipment it promoted an interdependence of camps and local community and fostered social cohesion.

3. The lighting within the camp and local community, including streetlights, improved security for people engaging in late evening social or economic activities.

4. Promoted e-learning access for 36,290 primary school students, addressing educational barriers directly impacting refugees in Kakuma and Dadaab camps.

5. Empowered 86 teachers with training and resources for the effective use of educational technology.

6. The project fostered behavioral changes in the use and preservation of natural resources, supporting the long-term sustainability of refugee camps and their relationships with surrounding communities and the government.

Replicability

The project offered valuable insights that can enhance replicability and success for future projects.

Local sourcing of components, skills, and materials proved to be challenging but presented an opportunity for the project to support the local community. The project relied on technicians from Nairobi while promoting mechanisms to bridge the local gap, through engaging with local suppliers and on-site training, it not only promoted a circular economy but increased opportunities for and the skills of the community. This was necessary to ensure the longevity of the scheme, but also to overcome technical issues faced, such as overheating due to sun or heat exposure, a direct consequence of climate change.

Dedicated project staff and investing in human resources capacity ensured efficient coordination, successful information management, and project continuity. Sensitizing and engaging the community early on instilled a sense of ownership and fostered long-term sustainability.

Effective data collection techniques, such as proper training and pilot testing for online tools, streamlined the process and enhanced data quality. Building committed partnerships with local stakeholders while being mindful of local politics bolstered the project's success and influenced perspectives at different levels.

The project's positive influence on the government's perspective toward the camp's future highlights the potential for replicable projects to impact broader policy discussions and decision-making. By incorporating these valuable lessons, future initiatives can be more effective, replicable, and sustainable in addressing climate change challenges and promoting environmentally conscious practices within communities.

Sustainability

The project focused on the provision of renewable energy systems and e-learning devices to schools in the refugee camps of Dadaab and Kakuma, implemented in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and exemplified a comprehensive and holistic approach to sustainability. It focused not only on environmental considerations but also on fostering long-term social and educational impacts within the refugee communities.

The project addressed the challenge of heavy reliance on local trees as a source of finance, fuel, and structural material by promoting behavioral change within the refugee camp.

Rather than imposing an immediate ban on using wood, the project advocated for a sustainable approach, encouraging the practice of planting several trees for each one felled and exploring alternative fuel sources. This strategy created an exponential curve toward a more environmentally conscious and sustainable future, influencing current and future generations to care for trees and nature.

To ensure the sustainability of the solar energy systems, the project took several effective measures. Solar equipment was secured in designated rooms with limited access, guaranteeing their safety and longevity.

Additionally, refugee technicians were equipped with basic skills in solar maintenance and management, forming an easily accessible pool of service providers to respond to any servicing needs. Both learners and teachers were trained on the basic care and maintenance of the e-learning devices, empowering them to monitor and control the devices' usage for safety and optimal functionality.

The project's collaboration with the UNHCR played a crucial role in its overall success and long-term sustainability. Working closely with the UN refugee agencyfrom the planning phase ensured continuity and support for the schools even if the managing organization changed in the future.

This partnership also aligned the project with broader education objectives, integrating refugee schools into the national educational system and promoting equitable access to quality education.

Massive awareness and sensitization efforts within the community, led by community leaders, learners, and teachers, fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility for the project's success. By involving the community in the management, safety, and security of the equipment and devices, the project established a sustainable approach to education and energy solutions.

Furthermore, the project's focus on e-learning devices and curriculum content alignment with the national educational system equipped current generations with essential skills and knowledge for an ever-changing world. It empowered

learners to embrace technology-driven education, enabling them to become responsible global citizens.

The end-of-project evaluation confirmed that the solar systems installed in 89% of the schools and classrooms were fully functional. This success rate was attributed to thorough due diligence during project planning, effective coordination, and engagement of quality services for the solar system installations, ensuring uninterrupted power supply to the schools.

Lastly, the project inadvertently contributed to local economic growth and diversification by creating opportunities for local vendors to sell solar equipment like panels, batteries, and lights, which are now readily available for necessary servicing and repairs by the schools. This unplanned outcome further strengthened the project's positive impact on the local community.

Overall, the project showcased a model for future collaborations in advancing sustainability, education, and community development in refugee settings. Through its comprehensive and holistic approach, it not only enhanced physical security and access to quality education but also instilled a culture of environmental stewardship, positively influencing the current and future generations' relationship with nature.

PALESTINE: Palestinian Youth Climate Justice Initiative

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

January 2021 to April 2021

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 1,914, The Lutheran World Federation

IMPLEMENTATION

The Environmental and Education Center of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land

SNAPSHOT

The Palestinian Youth Climate Justice Initiative was designed to address adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy. The project has been coherently designed within the context of military occupation and climate-related hazards. Palestinians deal with significant amounts of solid waste, water pollution, and reliance on locally grown agriculture. Therefore, education and responsibility were a major focus of these issues, coupled with an olive tree planting campaign, which provided a hands-on commitment service to preserve and restore the ecosystem and provide livelihoods, thereby raising hope.

Overview

The Palestinian Youth Climate Justice Initiative is a comprehensive program that combines training, workshops utilizing Information Technology (IT), and tangible actions like tree planting and recycling.

It focused on cultivating a cohort of resilient, skilled, and environmentally conscious youth in Palestine, recognizing that the paramount environmental justice work lies ahead and will likely fall into the hands of the next generation. IT formed part of the Environmental Leaders Program, "which has been instrumental in providing students with a unique opportunity to comprehend both local and global environmental challenges. It serves as a platform to raise awareness about climate change issues and fosters a sense of responsibility toward protecting biodiversity.

The program goes beyond education, affording students the chance to engage with decision-makers, honing their skills in lobbying and advocating for environmental causes. By empowering the youth through this comprehensive approach, the Environmental Leaders Program aims to create a new generation of environmentally conscious leaders who actively contribute to a greener and more sustainable future."

A core task throughout the project was to equip young individuals with the necessary resources, expertise, and capabilities to engage in informed discussions and take meaningful action. To accomplish this goal, the project utilized the expertise and resources of the Environmental Education Center, (EEC) an educational ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, in partnership with schools to organize two educational workshops centered around biodiversity and climate change topics relevant to Palestine.

The project emphasized a hands-on approach to environmental education, exemplified by the Olive Tree Planting Campaign and an Environmental Action Competition. The inclusion of these action-oriented components was crucial in imparting practical skills to care for the earth while instilling a sense of achievement, teamwork, and community cohesion among the youth.

Context

The environmental situation in Palestine is inseparable from its current military occupation. Like many countries, Palestinians deal with significant amounts of solid waste, water pollution, and reliance on locally grown agriculture.

Furthermore, Palestine frequently faces challenges due to access, resources, and the absence of peace required for effective environmental restoration and conservation efforts.

Litter is a significant problem, often impeding agricultural work, disrupting, or destroying habitats, and endangering wildlife. Citizen education and responsibility play a key role in addressing the issue, but it is complicated by the increasing lack of landfill space allotted to the West Bank.

Palestinians have limited access to landfills, making solid waste management a critical issue for maintaining the quality of life in this context.

The issue of water in Palestine is exceedingly complex. The region is abundant in streams and springs that farmers rely on, along with regular rainfall, to support successful agriculture. Maintaining clean water is of utmost importance for the well-being of citizens and the preservation of biodiversity.

Perhaps the most significant water-related challenge in Palestine is the issue of access. The control of all water resources by Israeli occupation forces has re-

sulted in a disproportionate allocation of water, with higher proportions directed toward new Israeli settlements with smaller populations.

Consequently, Palestinians, who previously had complete access to water in their homes, often face scarcity. This not only infringes upon the human rights of the Palestinian people but also hinders agricultural success.

Moreover, the frequent diversion of substantial water volumes from natural sources leaves previously thriving areas with depleted water resources, transforming once flourishing habitats into arid and barren landscapes. This destructive consequence negatively impacts the habitat and sustenance of many native Palestinian wildlife species.

Furthermore, the livelihood of most Palestinians depends on agriculture. A significant number of families rely specifically on the olive harvest to sustain themselves through the winters.

Olive trees hold ecological importance as well, given their substantial oxygen output compared to other tree species, and their role in providing essential soil restoration and habitat for various species.

Regrettably, continuous land loss has resulted in many farmers possessing only a portion, if any, of their land today. The construction of the occupation wall further exacerbated the situation by dividing the land of some farmers, rendering the other half of their livelihood physically inaccessible to them. Consequently, planting olive trees serves not only as an environmental act but also to provide livelihoods and foster hope.

Strategies

Community education, sensitization and capacity-strengthening for adaptation and resilience

The EEC organized Biodiversity in Palestine workshops in eight different schools, through which 149 students were educated about native species of birds, mammals, plants, invertebrates, algae, and microorganisms.

These workshops have been continued outside of this project to further impact schools under the EEC's Environmental Awareness Within the Palestinian Identity. Through presentations and discussions, students learned about the importance of biodiversity in Palestine and the threats it faces, including the impact of occupation violations and the apartheid wall.

The workshops encouraged student engagement through essay writing on endangered species and brainstorming sessions for eliminating threats to biodiversity.

The competition called Documentation of Biodiversity in Palestine further empowered students to explore and document their country's biodiversity, fostering a personal connection to the environment and inspiring environmental stewardship and advocacy among participants.

Furthermore, in March 2021, the EEC organized climate change workshops via virtual platforms that educated 129 students about the atmosphere, greenhouse gases, and global warming impacts.

The workshops included discussions on school-based activism for climate change mitigation, emphasizing planting campaigns, recycling, waste management, and green transportation.

Students also learned about the role of plants, especially olive trees, in transforming carbon dioxide into oxygen, thus mitigating harmful human emissions. The workshops aimed to equip students with the knowledge and tools to actively participate in climate change mitigation efforts within their schools and communities.

As a result of the recycling and waste management workshops, two schools out of six successfully implemented a plastic reduction initiative, focusing on both adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts.

These schools transitioned away from using single-use plastic containers for water and food, opting for B5, a reusable and sustainable material made from hard plastic and steel. Furthermore, starting from the first and fourth grades, other schools followed suit, adopting the plastic reduction initiative.

This collective effort has resulted in a significant reduction in plastic waste generation, leading to a positive impact on the environment. This project not only helped in adapting to a more sustainable approach but also contributed to mitigating the negative effects of plastic pollution on the environment.

Biodiversity conservation and restoration of ecosystems

The EEC organized eight olive tree planting campaigns in targeted schools during March and April 2021, aiming to contribute to climate change mitigation and foster volunteerism among 137 students. Led by Environment Education Centre staff, students learned proper tree-planting techniques while experiencing the joy and excitement of working together toward environmental conservation.

The campaign focused on planting olive trees and highlighting their importance to Palestinian identity and the economic well-being of farmers. The hands-on initiative encouraged students' involvement in environmental projects, fur-

ther strengthening their connection to the environment and promoting climate change mitigation through community engagement.

Advocacy and visibility

The Documentation of Biodiversity in Palestine competition, held in January 2021, was developed to directly advocate for student involvement in discovering and documenting Palestine's unique biodiversity. Participants from eight schools were assigned photographs of native animals and tasked to research their designated species, identifying basic facts, environmental threats, estimated population, and endangered status.

The initiative specifically empowered the students to explore Palestine's biodiversity during hikes and connect personally with their environment. The competition promoted environmental advocacy and stewardship directly among the students as they worked to produce their reports. It also encouraged thoughtful engagement, in contrast with typical classroom teaching methods, where students had the freedom and flexibility to produce their reports.

The winners were further incentivized through prizes, to support further environmental projects in their schools, such as funding plant nursery seeds and environmental club activities including the "Healthy Nutrition" workshop at Dar Al Kalima for first place. Second- and third-place schools Beit Jala Secondary School and the School of Hope respectively, opted to invest in plants, flowers, soil, and plant pots that were installed around their schools.

Solid network

The project engaged with key government and leadership figures in environmental matters. They held discussions with influential individuals such as Jameel Mtour, head of the Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority, providing an opportunity for youth to express their concerns and interact with leaders in the country's environmental program.

These interactions aimed to inspire and empower youth to act and have a lasting effect on their commitment to environmental causes. Additionally, the project collaborated with Riad Attari from the Ministry of Agriculture to address the importance of tree planting in combating desertification.

The emphasis on government and leadership engagement highlights the significance of involving decision-makers in driving positive change for climate and environmental protection.

Local to Global To Local

At the local level, the project focused on early intervention, engaging with children to address climate issues proactively. By empowering young minds, they

will foster a sense of responsibility and care for the environment from an early age.

Simultaneously, it extended its impact to global platforms, actively participating youth in the "youth4climate" conference pre-COP26 in Milan, Italy, and contributing to international climate discussions, providing participants valuable insights into both country-specific and global climate challenges and solutions.

These interactions aimed to inspire and empower youth to act and have a lasting effect on their commitment to environmental causes. Additionally, the project collaborated with Riad Attari from the Ministry of Agriculture to address the importance of tree planting in combating desertification.

> *"We took the initiative to include a youth representative in Conference of the Parties Italy, giving them the chance to interact with global leaders and share their personal experiences related to climate change." (Simon Awad, Executive Director of the Environment Education Centre)*

With a combination of local engagement, global participation, and ecological justice principles, the EEC engaged in a L2G2L approach to equip communities with the tools and knowledge required to adapt and mitigate climate challenges effectively.

Through their efforts, the project has fostered a sense of environmental responsibility, reduced negative environmental impacts, and contributed to a sustainable future.

Target Group

The project engaged 240 Palestinian children, aged 13–14 years old (8th grade), comprising 60% female students and 40% male students. Students were selected from partner schools all over the West Bank, including the Evangelical Lutheran School in Beit Sahour, Dar Al-Kalima School in Bethlehem, the Evangelical School of Hope in Ramallah, Talitha Kumi School in Beit Jala, the Greek Catholic Patriarchate School, Al-Mustaqbal School in Ramallah, Beit Jala Secondary School for Girls, and Beit Jala Cooperated Basic School.

Impact

1. It has influenced students to adopt healthier food habits, promoting a shift toward a more sustainable and environmentally friendly lifestyle.

2. Cleanup campaigns conducted in schools and surrounding areas have resulted in a cleaner and more environmentally conscious community.

3. The project has successfully reduced plastic use in two schools, implementing eco-friendly alternatives such as reusable materials.

4. The project has been instrumental in building leadership skills through a continued education system, not only among students buy also within their communities.

5. Activities within classes and communities have fostered a sense of responsibility and awareness of environmental issues, encouraging active participation in advocating for green causes.

Replicability

Offering leadership training across different areas proved crucial in navigating movement restrictions between occupied territories, strikes, and area closures. Focusing on leadership skills facilitated effective planning and adaptation to changing circumstances.

> *"The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic required innovative solutions to continue program activities. Embracing online formats and social media communication helped overcome some of the limitations imposed by school closures and movement restrictions." (Simon Awad, Executive Director of the Environment Education Centre)*

Ensuring equal access to online communication and workshops posed a challenge, especially for students with limited internet connectivity, notably those in refugee camps. Inclusivity and exploring alternative engagement methods are vital for reaching all participants, transcending potential connectivity disparities and ensuring meaningful involvement for all.

Sustainability

The EEC plans to continue working with the partner schools to maintain the sense of Palestinian identity linked to a healthy environment and ensure that the knowledge gained during the project remains ingrained in the student's understanding.

The center aims to build on the student's awareness and knowledge through further workshops, competitions, and environmental activism campaigns under the Freedom of Movement project.

By engaging the students in workshops focused on natural resources in Palestine, the project aimed to deepen their understanding of local environmental challenges and potential solutions.

Although this project did not have a dedicated coordinator for sustainability, the efforts and successes achieved during its implementation have laid a strong foundation for ongoing sustainability practices. The schools' adoption of these practices, such as reduction in plastic use, cleanup campaigns, planting initiatives, and embracing healthier food choices, indicates their proactivity and commitment to environmental stewardship beyond the project's duration.

Furthermore, the project's emphasis on building leadership skills and advocacy training has empowered the students not only within their school settings but also within their communities. It fostered a sense of collective responsibility and instilled a forward-looking perspective.

The project has successfully empowered a generation of environmentally conscious and proactive individuals who will continue to drive positive change in addressing climate change and environmental challenges in the future.

TANZANIA:
Together for Greenish Community

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

July 2022 to October 2022

BUDGET AND FUNDING

EUR 2,000, The Lutheran World Federation

SNAPSHOT

The Together for Greenish Community initiative is designed to address adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy. Tanzania is experiencing increases in temperature, rising wind speeds, and a concerning decline in rainfall over time as a direct result of climate change. To tackle the negative impacts of climate change, the project focused on environmental conservation education and ownership within community initiatives to mitigate aggravating effects, such as deforestation and waste pollution.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Lutheran World Federation and youth from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

The initiative stands as a shining example of how small-scale innovative projects tackle climate change impacts and can influence widespread young people and women, to become drivers of positive change influence through collective ownership and environmental preservation.

The project's approach advocated a sense of volunteering, which overcame financial constraints and engaged the local community in ownership activities, specifically those most affected by climate change impacts, such as youth and women.

The project relied on climate activists, with support from the LWF, to host school educational workshops, tree planting initiatives, beach cleanup activities, empowerment groups, media advocacy, coordinated events, and behavioral changes within the local communities.

> *"We have the spirit of volunteering. We managed to work on the spirit of ownership. The environment is there for everybody." (Erick Kapira, Project Director and Rastone Lazaro, Project Coordinator and Technical Assistant).*

Context

Water availability is problematic in Tanzania, owing to its mostly arid and semi-arid landscape in combination with seasonal rainfall patterns. Climate change exacerbates temperature extremes, longer dry spells, and heavy rainfall, which further impact the functionality of water sources, resulting in either flooding or extreme droughts.

In addition to these hardship areas, Tanzania has one of the fastest rates of deforestation in the world, driven largely by demographic change and the resulting demand for agricultural land and domestic cooking fuel. Deforested land is at higher risk of damage from floods and droughts, less able to absorb water, and more prone to erosion.

Furthermore, Tanzania has increasingly seen microplastic debris in both marine and freshwater systems over the past decade. The risks and impacts are progressively worsening due to human pressures and increased urbanization, coupled with general inadequate awareness.

In this context, the project positions itself to support local communities in awareness raising, skills, and opportunities toward mitigating the impacts of water scarcity, deforestation, and waste pollution through its initiatives and principles.

Strategies

Community education, sensitization and capacity strengthening for adaptation and resilience

The project focused on empowering those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, mainly youth and women, with an emphasis on advocacy and adaptation.

The project achieved over 80% youth engagement within its activities and supported seven youth groups, including four out-of-school groups and three in-school groups. Furthermore, five women empowerment groups were formed and addressed the vulnerabilities they faced due to climate impacts, providing education and support for building independence and resilience.

The project also aimed to enhance environmental conservation through education and practical engagement. Behavioral changes were instigated with the addition of waste management equipment in schools, coupled with student workshop engagements that highlighted the importance of meeting the 1.5°C target from the Paris Agreement.

Furthermore, the project included local communities in beach cleanups to further engage its members in working toward environmental conservation goals.

Biodiversity conservation and restoration of ecosystems

The project placed significant emphasis on mitigating the effects of deforestation, through tree-planting workshops and events. As a result, 5,000 trees have been planted. School events led to the planting of 1,800 trees, the Kilwa Women Forum group grew 500, and the remaining were planted through various communities.

This hands-on approach not only contributed to mitigating the impacts of deforestation and climate change, but also empowered individuals to take responsibility for actions within their sphere of influence.

Community sensitization and advocacy

Guided by a strong spirit of volunteering and ownership, the project coordinated events and advocacy tools with local government, stakeholders, and communities. To raise climate awareness, the project leveraged media platforms, including local radio and television through Mashujaa TV, reaching an estimated 13,230 people.

This initiative emphasized the universal importance of the environment and increased local familiarity with climate change and its impacts. Furthermore, the project supported national awareness days in collaboration with other organizations.

Local to Global to Local Approach

On the global stage, the project was presented in events like the Vice President Environmental Day, a significant environmental commemoration, which falls under the Ministry of Environment.

During the commemoration, the project collaborated with education and environmental departments, as well as Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service, to raise awareness about environmental conservation and promote tree planting and personal hygiene at Miteja Secondary School in Kilwa District.

After global engagements, the project circled back to the local community, involving members within the event and ensuring that the knowledge and experiences gained from international engagements were effectively communicated and implemented.

This approach strengthened local ownership and sustainability of the project's efforts, fostering a deeper connection between global policies and local action. Further collaboration occurred with representatives from government bodies, such as the National Environmental Management Committee, and the District Environmental Officer, and the District Education Officer, who are responsible for climate change policy attended the organized events.

> *"The Together for Greenish Community project in Tanzania adopted a local to global to local approach to address environmental challenges. It began by engaging local community leaders and extended to involve country leaders at the national level. The project's significance was acknowledged when its representative was invited to speak about this initiative in Parliament, highlighting its impact on environmental policies and approaches." (Erick Kapira, Project Director)*

Target Group

The project indirectly impacted around 1,780 students through tree planting and educational awareness activities in schools, including Miteja, Mbuyuni, Ngome, Kilwa, and Nanjirinji Secondary Schools.

Among these students, around 150 actively participated in seven dedicated youth groups, advocating for climate action, and promoting environmental awareness within their communities.

About 125 women formed five women empowerment groups that actively fostered gender-inclusive climate action initiatives and promoted women's active participation in environmental conservation efforts.

Moreover, approximately 350 households were engaged in the project's tree-planting efforts, beach cleanups, and climate change education activities, contributing to environmental conservation and climate resilience within their immediate surroundings.

Impact

1. Through community engagement and awareness initiatives, the project removed barriers in traditional beliefs that hindered tree planting.

2. The project brought about coordinated interactions between government leaders and local communities, leading to a shared responsibility approach from both in addressing climate challenges. These resulted in the increased distribution of public dustbins and government-led tree nurseries.

3. The project served as a catalyst, inspiring local communities and schools to enhance their environment through beach cleanups, greener practices, and tree planting.

4. Members of the women empowerment groups, along with their families and communities, have benefited from climate awareness education, focusing on how to operate businesses without polluting the environment. Several groups have received formal recognition from the government, which is necessary for them to receive additional support from outside this project initiative.

5. The project inspired youth and inspired interfaith dialogue benefiting both Muslims and Christians, empowering them to take part in climate action and environmental awareness efforts.

6. The impact of the project was recognized at the highest level, as its representative was invited to present its initiatives in Parliament,

providing a platform to advocate for increased support and to address climate change challenges at a national level. These centered around reducing carbon emissions resulting from charcoal burning through subsidized alternative sources, reduction in the use of plastic bags, increased producer accountability, and finally, a more focused approach to educational awareness in schools, adopting tree planting campaigns.

Replicability

Throughout the project implementation, several valuable learning experiences offered a blueprint for replication in future initiatives. This project effectively inspired, and engaged communities, formed action groups, and overcame substantial financial barriers in the pursuit of climate awareness and action.

The key to this success lay in fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility within the communities, empowering them to take climate action.

The project worked closely with the most vulnerable members of society, including women and youth, and succeeded in empowering those whose voices were often overlooked but who are most affected by climate change impacts. Whether indirectly influencing households or directly shaping the minds and the passion of future generations, the project's widespread approach tackled the multifaceted country challenges.

One of the most influential tools employed by the project was community engagement. Through hosting and supporting captivating events with inspiring country leaders, the initiative made participation in the wave of change more accessible and rewarding for all involved. As a result, people were encouraged to become active contributors to the cause.

The initial project involved planting and cleanup activities, relying on engaging with volunteers to support the project's vision. However, the team's success rested heavily on their adaptability, as they faced challenging circumstances like remote travel, limited technology, funding constraints, and low awareness among the engaged participants. This was overcome by utilizing a combination of local public transport, local technology, reliance on volunteering, and persistence with education and awareness advocacy.

Overall, the achievements of this project stand as a testament that with unwavering support and ambition, positive change can be accomplished. Initiatives like this are undoubtedly worthwhile investments in a brighter and more sustainable future.

Sustainability

The Together for Greenish Community project in Tanzania has demonstrated sustainability through successful engagement with local government, stakeholders, and the community.

Through its inclusive approach, community involvement, and empowerment of women and youth, the project has created lasting connections, ensuring its positive effects persist in the long term.

The LWF climate activists regularly support and attend empowerment groups, monitor tree planting progress in secondary schools, and remain actively engaged within impacted communities.

UNITED STATES: Climate Justice and Faith Certificate

Overview

PROJECT DURATION

September 2021 to May 2022 and September 2022 to May 2023

BUDGET AND FUNDING

USD 52,000 The Lutheran World Federation, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - ELCA Hunger, individual congregations and donors.

SNAPSHOT

The Climate Justice and Faith Certificate initiative is designed to address adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy. This program is a collaborative

effort between the LWF and the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. It offers an online course on climate justice and faith, catering to individuals affiliated with the LWF member churches, regardless of whether they hold lay or ordained positions.

IMPLEMENTATION

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

What sets this project apart is its approach to training students in climate-related matters, equipping them with the necessary tools and support.

The distinctive aspect and relevance lie in empowering these students to take charge and implement projects that tackle adaptation, mitigation, and climate justice advocacy initiatives within their respective communities.

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The program's total cost per student amounts to USD 600, yet it is noteworthy that financial assistance is commonly provided by the Center for Climate Justice and Faith. In 2022-23 USD 21,000 in scholarships were granted.

Spanning over eight months, the course comprises weekly online classes with various tasks that include readings, active participation in a chat board, written assignments, and the presentation of a final project proposal for implementation within their communities.

Upon successful completion of the non-degree study program, participants are granted a Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith, accredited by California Lutheran University.

This certificate program utilized an online, cohort-based, and trans-continental approach, empowering participants to develop ethical, spiritual, and practical leadership abilities in the field of climate justice within faith-based communities and through collaborative efforts with others.

Context

The project's online nature enabled individuals in 26 countries, and five continents to participate in the certificate program, thereby enriching the scope of its discussions and global impact.

After the successful implementation of the first two courses in English, the project has been expanded to encompass Spanish-speaking people in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and North America, with three facilitators from the LAC region.

The LWF partners for this program are the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, the Augsburg Lutheran Seminary in Mexico, the Salvadoran Lutheran University in El Salvador, and the Institute for Contextual Pastoral Ministry in Argentina and Uruguay.

Strategies

Community education, sensitization and capacity-strengthening for adaptation and resilience and a solid network

The project originates as a joint initiative between the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) World Hunger, and the LWF.

This solid network has ensured its program sustainability and positioned the seminary as a leading authority in matters concerning climate justice. Furthermore, as an integral part of its networking strategy, the seminary has forged strong bonds with both former and current students, and through them, with their respective communities.

Community education, awareness raising, and capacity-strengthening

As a component of their coursework, students are encouraged to develop and implement projects that address the pressing issue of climate change within their communities. This not only ensures the sustainability of the initiative and amplifies its impact, but also emphasizes the utmost importance of inclusivity and thoughtful consideration of local communities, particularly the most vulnerable. Solutions are devised from a local perspective, considering their uniqueness and people's needs. This approach has placed great emphasis on local decision-making and the practical application of the Local to Global to Local approach.

Throughout the eight-month course, students undergo educational instruction and engage in discussions on climate-related topics. The curriculum links the theological basis of care for creation to knowledge about climate. The primary learning objectives encompass recognizing and addressing the intersections between climate change and disparities based on race, economy, and gender.

The curriculum covers various subjects such as theology, ethics, and spirituality pertaining to climate justice, climate change knowledge, and social change methodologies linking ecological well-being to racial, economic, gender justice,

and other topics discussed at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as how to advocate at a national, regional, and global level.

The project employs a multiplier approach, requiring primary participants to disseminate their knowledge and implement a project within their respective local communities.

Advocacy

The distinctiveness of the advocacy activities lies in their execution, which involves not only project implementation through its channels but also the active engagement of the attendees and their communities. This approach enables the project to extend its influence beyond borders and achieve a more profound impact at the local level.

Shede Habila earned a certificate from the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary Center for Climate Justice and Faith in 2022. He is leading a reforestation initiative in his community in Yola, Nigeria. As a member of the Lutheran Church of Christ of Nigeria, Habila has seen the impacts of the climate crisis firsthand and understands the urgency of solving it.

> *"We are here to push and advocate for the governments to put more effort into addressing the global climate crisis… The right time to act is now," said Shede Habila.*

Anania Ndondole from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania completed the Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith at the same time as Shede Habila, and now leads climate justice work in his church. *"Young people must raise their voices for climate justice and a future on this planet. Young people must be ambassadors of change," said Ndondole.*

This program offers a comprehensive online curriculum designed to foster a trans-contextual cohort-based learning experience.

> *"It will not only broaden participants' knowledge but deepen their experience of the global nature of climate justice efforts. Participants will explore their understanding of what it means to lead the climate justice work of congregations and groups within their context. They will also deepen their spirituality of climate justice work so that they are equipped to effectively lead others." (Rev. Dr. Chad Rimmer, LWF Program Executive for Theology)*

The program introduces learners to a wide range of international reports and scientific resources concerning climate change. Furthermore, it encourages dialogue with interfaith and local partners actively involved in climate justice initiatives.

Subsequently, students are tasked with developing projects aimed at creating tangible and meaningful impacts within their communities and beyond.

> *"Because of my project, I was able to organize a climate course in the school I teach. They really understood what climate change is and what it means to love and care about the environment. We encourage my community to take care of the environment. What I see in my project is that my community could see what it means to love what God has created." (Sabi Elizabeth Aitiya, Graduate)*

Participating students remain well-informed about ongoing global discussions, reports, and scientific advancements related to climate change. By applying this knowledge to their projects, they contribute to fostering enduring positive change within their respective communities.

Target Group

The primary educational objectives encompass the identification and resolution of the interconnections between climate change and disparities based on race, economics, and gender. Throughout the course, numerous discussions have been conducted concerning the disproportionate implications of climate change on gender and youth. Cases, like the one of Sabi Elizabeth Aititya mentioned above, create a huge impact in their communities and provide women the possibility to become local leaders. *"Her story was published in local press twice as a woman of faith speaking out graciously and powerfully about this challenge as a critical movement to living out our vocation as followers of Christ."*

For potential participants, this program offers a valuable opportunity to explore faith-based climate justice initiatives in their own contexts. It is designed for individuals seeking spiritual insights to support their climate action efforts. This accessible, non-degree program is conducted entirely online via Zoom and interactive digital platforms. Applicants from communities disproportionately affected by climate change and from LWF member churches are especially encouraged to apply.

The application is open to everyone, with a particular emphasis on individuals who hold leadership positions or aspire to become leaders within their congregations. The program centers around Christian perspectives and encourages participants to engage in ecumenical discussions based on relevant texts. Selection criteria for the course includes strong connection with local communities, eagerness to implement learning, and demonstrated commitment to completing a final project. The following are the course requirements for participants: Two to 4 hours of independent work per week for each 15-week semester. Engagement in 90 minutes of scheduled Zoom meetings with their cohort every month throughout the academic year, periodically taking on facilitator roles. Participation and collaboration with local initiatives, congregations, and/or groups (especially by the spring-first semester) to ensure context-based practice of the concepts discussed in

the secondfall semester. Willingness to take on the work of climate justice as a spiritual practice within their spheres of influence.

The first course took place from September 2021 until May 2022, during which 25 participants successfully completed their studies. Subsequently, the second course was conducted from September 2022 until May 2023, resulting in the graduation of 22 students out of a total cohort of 40. Preparations are underway for the commencement of a third English course.

Impact

1. Graduates and participants are prepared to cultivate moral, spiritual, and practical power for the work of climate justice in communities of faith and in collaboration with others.

2. Participants are more prepared to tackle climate change and have participated in climate change negotiations at a national and global level.

3. Graduates recognize and address intersections of climate change with racial, economic, and gender-based inequity, and intersections of ecological well-being with racial, economic, and gender justice.

4. Congregations, synods, and dioceses are better equipped to fulfill their baptismal vocation to "seek justice and peace in all Earth" in the face of climate crises intertwined with issues of racial and economic injustice.

5. The Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary is at the forefront of faith-based work for environmental justice and creation care. It serves as a powerful witness to the world, demonstrating that the church is relevant, justice-seeking, creation-caring, and empowering.

6. As part of the curricula, the students designed and implemented different projects that addressed adaptation, mitigation, and/or advocacy in their respective communities, owning the problem and multiplying the project's impact.

Replicability

In the second course, there were a total of 40 registrations. Twenty-two students graduated, representing a completion rate of 55%.

"Our primary focus is currently directed toward enhancing student retention, which has presented some challenges, particularly with regard to students

based in African countries facing difficulties accessing the Internet. To address this issue, during the second year, we took the initiative of providing financial assistance for Internet access or data cards, which proved beneficial for certain students.

Language proficiency has also emerged as a significant barrier. As a response, we have introduced courses in Spanish. This way, we aim to ensure a more inclusive and accessible learning environment. Additionally, we have implemented stricter language proficiency requirements for participants, to ensure a higher completion rate.

Furthermore, it came to our attention that many students lacked the necessary funds to implement the projects proposed in the course. To support them in realizing their ideas, we began offering grants specifically dedicated to project implementation." (Sarah Berg, Director, Centre for Climate Justice and Faith)

In summary, the current efforts revolve around evaluating methods to enhance student retention. This may entail increasing the availability of grant funding or fostering stronger connections between students and their local communities.

One idea under consideration is to require a letter of recommendation from a local faith-based organization, as such endorsements could potentially heighten the students' sense of accountability and commitment to the program.

Sustainability

The networks established through the collaboration of various communities, organizations, and state entities have been designed with the intention of long-term sustainability. The collective synergy created within these networks provided opportunities and benefits for all sectors involved.

The project boasts a robust network that fosters its sustainability and facilitates international engagement. The funding sources for the project include esteemed entities such as the LWF, ELCA World Hunger, individual congregations, and a select group of individual donors, along with the Californian Lutheran University.

Moreover, the project's steering committee consists of professionals representing diverse organizations from various regions, including the LWF, ELCA World Hunger, the Institute for Contextual Pastoral Ministry in Argentina and Uruguay, Core Doctoral Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union, Lutherans Restoring

Creation, Salvadoran Lutheran University in El Salvador, and the Augsburg Lutheran Seminary in Mexico, among others.

Furthermore, the students have wholeheartedly embraced the project's mission, effectively implementing successful initiatives in their local communities. The support from the students' communities, both in terms of financial assistance and willingness to contribute their connections, ideas, and time, has been substantial in ensuring the project's success.

Overall, this formidable network, comprising professors, current and former students, donors, and the aforementioned organizations, guarantees the project's long-term sustainability.

> *"To maintain a strong connection with their graduates, the project actively engages with them through social media and WhatsApp channels, facilitating updates, news-sharing, and mutual motivation to continue their impactful work in their respective communities." (Sarah Berg, Director, Centre for Climate Justice and Faith)*

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