

Indigenous knowledge Bank

As part of Climate and Development

Example of locales practices : Causeway Construction

Geographical area of use : Gambia; Lower River Region; village of Sikunda.

Information of the practice

The village of Sikunda in the Jarra West District, Lower River Region of the Gambia is a predominantly Mandingo community with a population of 1003 people; 558 female and 445 male, as per the 2003 population and housing census. It is close to the main regional commercial center of Soma, Pakalinding and Toniataba.

The need for constructing causeways was realized as far back as 1981 and is aimed at improving access to rice fields in swampy areas, which would otherwise not have been easily reached. Construction work is normally undertaken during the dry season. As the practice is still ongoing, it is supported by agencies such as Freedom From Hunger Campaign (FFHC), Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP), Community Driven Development Project (CDDP) and Action Aid-The Gambia (AATG).

Impact of climate hazards

Table 1: Link the practice with climate change

| Climate factor/hazard | Environmental Impact | Socio-economic impact |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Low rainfall | -Low crop yields | Low incomes Ill health Restlessness |

Illustrations



Description de la technologie

This practice is undertaken with a view to enhance access especially to those rice fields which are usually flooded during the rainy season. The primary objective is to boost food production and ensure its availability during critical periods or shortages. It also aims at raising income levels to enable household better satisfy or fulfill other obligations.

The process of constructing causeways requires the use of tools such as spades, pickaxes, wheelbarrows, pans and measuring tape. These materials are acquired through the support of those agencies mentioned in section 4 above. Having identified the affected areas and taken the necessary measurements of 3 meters wide, 3 meters high and 2 meters foot path, the community comes out to dig the clay, which is used to build the access way. The clay is mixed with stones to harden the surface to allow donkey carts to pass through both during the construction and evacuation of produce.

During the early days, the community used to be provided with food for work such as rice, cooking oil and canned beef, to further motivate the people.

The partners mentioned in section 4 above are considered as the main stakeholders. The practice was initiated by the community as the beneficiaries; the youths (both male and female) are the main actors whilst the women are the main users. Whilst the men dig the clay and stones, the women are engaged in the transportation and provision of drinking water. As stated earlier, the purpose is to ease access to and with the rice fields in order to maximize production. An estimated 6000 people, both within and in the surrounding communities benefit from this practice.

Sustainability :

In order to enhance economic viability, the community has started a bank account in Soma. The practice has also led to land reclamation, and enhanced cooperation as decisions are based on group consensus.

Strengths and weaknesses of the practice

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to rice fields. • Increased yields. | -Low crop yields |

Posibilities for replication

It was generally agreed that it would be possible to transfer/replicate the practice, but there are certain conditions that will have to be considered. Key among these is unity which is essential in mobilizing the required labor force.

The practice is said to have been replicated in the village of Toniataba by the Village Development Committee (VDC).

Estimated cost

It is estimated that D1000.00 will be required for every 25 meters

Remarks

Considering that the practice is a community initiative and has contributed in enhancing food security, the community still requires additional support for expansion.

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