

NIGER

Adapting pastoral and agricultural practices to the realities of climate change

Grantee: Action pour la Gestion Intégrée des Ressources (AGIR)

Type of organization: NGO

Number of participants: 2,000

Location: Roubou Municipality, Dakoro Department, Niger

CBA Contribution: \$20,000 USD

Project Partners: CBOs, Roubou Municipality, Association Nigérienne pour la Modernisation de l'Élevage (ANPME), Equiterre (Swiss NGO)

Co-financing: CBA Japanese Fund (\$60,000 USD), Equiterre (\$43,000 USD), in-kind community and municipality contributions

Project Dates: March 2009 – March 2011

BACKGROUND

The Community-Based Adaptation Programme (CBA) is a five-year United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) global initiative funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) within the Small Grants Programme (SGP) delivery mechanism. The UN Volunteers partners with UNDP and GEF/SGP to enhance community mobilization, recognize volunteers' contribution and ensure inclusive participation around the project, as well as to facilitate capacity building of partner NGOs and CBOs. In addition, funding is provided by the Government of Japan, the Government of Switzerland, and AusAID. The CBA's goal is to strengthen the resiliency of communities to address climate change impacts.

The CBA project, "Adapting pastoral and agricultural practices to the realities of climate change", focuses on the village of Roubou in the Maradi region of central Niger. The Sahara desert and bordering semi-arid Sahel zone cover approximately 80 percent of the country's land. A majority of Niger's water resources are concentrated in a small green belt in the south. The Tarka Valley is one of the nation's few remaining fertile areas. Although it borders the Tarka Valley, the village of Roubou is at risk of desertification as the semi-arid Sahel zone expands. The project area has a strong tradition of pastoralism, dating back to its original inhabitants, the nomadic Touareg and Peulh tribes. Farmers from the Haoussa tribe also moved into the area during

the 1960s in search of fertile land. Both pastoralists and farmers now depend on increasingly scarce natural resources for their livelihoods. Plagued by high levels of poverty and structural food insecurity, the area suffers from unsustainable agropastoral practices and increasing risks of conflicts over natural resources. Working with three communities consisting of about 6,000 people, the CBA project will involve 2,000 participants in activities that promote more sustainable agricultural and pastoral practices and will help the population deal with predicted climate changes.

CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS

Climate change experts expect Niger to experience increasingly variable rainfall patterns and higher temperature over the coming decades. Frequent droughts are already a problem, as rainfall levels have steadily declined since the late 1960s, resulting in an extended dry season that now lasts for nine months. Recently, permanent and semi-permanent ponds have dried up and the water table has decreased. The degradation of the Tarka Valley ecosystem has forced some residents into unsustainable and destructive practices, such as cutting firewood for sale, which exacerbate problems further. More frequent droughts and increased water scarcity, expected with climate change, combined with unsustainable resource management practices, will accelerate deforestation and desertification, and threaten the livelihoods of those who depend on the land.



A community vulnerability assessment is conducted in Roubou, as part of project formulation. Community ownership is a critical element of community-based adaptation projects.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ADAPTATION MEASURES

This CBA project aims to foster sustainable water management, agricultural, and pastoral practices that will help local residents better deal with current and future environmental challenges. The project was prepared through a lengthy participatory process and is being implemented by a local non-governmental organization called AGIR, which specializes in sustainable resource management. The project's activities are designed to increase the communities' capacity to adapt to climate change through a variety of strategies:

- Introduction of alternative crop production methods to maximize yields
- Distribution of quick-maturing seed varieties to help farmers reduce their vulnerability to droughts
- Training of farmers in improved soil fertilization and regeneration techniques. The farmers trained will share these techniques with their peers.
- Planting of tree and hedgerows that will protect against soil erosion caused by increasingly strong winds and rainstorms and increase the fertility of degraded soils
- Rehabilitating traditional wells using cement instead of wooden logs, which must be replaced frequently, contributing to deforestation
- Creation of a community-managed grain bank where residents have access to additional stores of staple crops, reducing food insecurity
- A training and capacity building program that helps ensure ownership of the new adaptive techniques by local farmers, pastoralists, and community leaders



A project participant working in a plot where quick-maturing varieties of millet, the local staple crop, are being tested

This strategy will help the local residents to make the Tarka Valley ecosystem more resilient to climate change and will improve food security and livelihood conditions.

FOCUS ON...

Global environmental benefit

The project will introduce sustainable land management practices for water use, agriculture and pastures that will reduce the rate of deforestation and desertification, and regenerate the fragile ecosystem of Tarka Valley. The project will also plant drought resistant trees and hedgerows that will restore the fertility of degraded soils.

Community ownership and sustainability

The community of Roumbou has played an important role during the formulation of the project. To ensure its ownership over implementation, project activities have been integrated into local-level management planning. Residents will also ensure the sustainability of the project by disseminating lessons learned throughout surrounding villages.

Policy influence

The project will promote the integration of climate change considerations into local-level resource management planning.

For more information about CBA or CBA projects visit: www.undp-adaptation.org/project/cba

Further information, lessons learned, and experiences gathered from climate change adaptation activities globally can be found at the Adaptation Learning Mechanism: www.adaptationlearning.net

