



Climate & Development Community Extension Project

2016

PROJECT TITLE AND PROJECT NUMBER:

Climate and Development Community Ext - LPE14 ZA 000 133172

Reporting Period: March 2015 to March 2016

ORGANISATION'S DETAILS

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Date of establishment	1992
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COMMUNITIES WITH CHAMPIONS

MAKANA MUNICIPALITY	NKONKOBÉ MUNICIPALITY	NDLAMBE MUNICIPALITY	NQUSHWA MUNICIPALITY	BUFFALLO CITY
Grahamstown	Njwaxa	KwaNokqubela	Nobumba	Amalindana
Reebieck East	Msobomvu	Alexandria	Qeto	Zinyoka
	Khayaletu		Mthathi	Sttuterrhem
	Mfiki			
	Lower Regu			

Why work with Champions?

There is a growing need for a more involved approach to permaculture. One that speaks not only to food production but to urban renewal as well as to water, soil, energy and pollution anagement. One that intergrates ecology, landscaping and organic gardening to create a rich and sustainable way of living.

Training with the Champions was undertaken during the **Champions' Forum** to enhance their understanding of permaculture presented in a practical and hands-on manner.

The key components of the Climate Change training were:

- Site assessment.
- Sustainable garden design.
- Water harvesting.
- Recycling, reusing and reducing.

These included site visits to a Permaculture Farm and practical demonstrations by the owner who is a Permaculture Design specialist.

Champions' forum.

Umthathi works with Champions from communities within a 200km of Grahamstown. A recent evaluation highlighted certain areas that need to be strengthened if long term success is to be achieved. This necessitated the reviewing of training material, looking at gaps and updating information in alignment with current standards and community needs. The yearly Forum spans over a week and is an information sharing and training platform for all the active Champions each year.

20 Champions from five municipalities attended the Forum together with Umthathi facilitators.

The topics that were selected for further training were as a direct response to baseline studies and based on overlapping needs across all the communities with Champions.

1. SITE ASSESMENT

- Access to water.
- Slope.
- Soil.
- Structures.
- Available material.
- Disaster readiness.

2. SUSTAINABLE GARDEN DESIGN

- Relationships.
- Diversity.
- Purpose.
- Cooperation.

3. WATER HARVESTING

- Vegetation.
- Mulch.
- Dams.
- Swale diversions.
- Innovative water usage.

4. RECYCLING, REUSING, REDUCING.

- Definitions.
- Commonly recycled material.
- Waste management.

Project Objectives.

Objective 1

To train 30 Champions in using the Climate and Disaster Risk Management Tool (CliDR).

In as much as Champions conducted training on the CliDR tool in their communities, it still didn't leave communities with enough in terms of practical and context specific response mechanisms to the challenges of climate change as more emphasis was put on understanding climate change and being able to identify risks. For instance water shortage in Makana Municipality reached unprecedented crisis proportions. Even though it had been identified as a risk in previous trainings there was still a lot of reliance on the Municipality to come in with lasting solutions to the problem. This crisis saw Grahamstown going through water-shedding where watering of gardens was not prioritised and some residence areas would go without water for 12-24 hours. This escalated the need for us to have a different, more self sufficient and practical manner of dealing with the problem. The Grahamstown Champions have focused more on helping their community find ways of dealing with the water challenge by working with households on innovative water usage and composting. 25 households were trained on this and the Champions took it a step further by visiting each household, assessing the

lay-out of the garden and advising on best practises in conjunction with the available resources in the homestead.

Current indicators:

- ✓ **100% of the Champions have used the tool to determine the risk of climate change in their communities.**
- ✓ **100% of the Champions are able to analyse and assess projects in their area with regards to climate change and disaster risks.**
- ✓ **100% of the Champions are in a position to assist their community participants in adapting to the climate change risks identified in the assessment.**

Objective 2

To train 30 Champions on the Climate Change Chapter in the Umthathi Training Manual.

This Chapter focuses on a holistic and healthy approach to sustainable livelihoods. It deals more with soil productivity for sustainable vegetable production.

Although this Chapter is part of the overall Healthy Living Training incorporating it into the Climate Change training helped us isolate one aspect of it that was overlooked when training it as part of seven pillars. That was the sustainability aspect of it and why the need for sustainability. Most of our people use gardening as a last resort when they are faced with the scarcity of funds. Pairing it with Climate Change helped us establish that in fact it should be a lifestyle choice given the fact that the unpredictable state of our climate is a direct result of humanity's irresponsible choices towards the environment. Permaculture is very responsive to environmental needs in that it is clean, healthy, affordable and soil friendly. We dwelt at length on how responsible environmental choices lead to more stable communities, facilitating community pride and giving communities a sense of control derived from the knowledge that they can take positive action. Champions in Ndlambe Municipality took positive action by identifying a site and securing it, working together with Umthathi staff to get registered and apply for assistance from the Department of Agriculture. They identified the Climate Change risks in their area and since their land was too exposed and it was prone to be windy in the area, they requested for trees which Umthathi assisted them to access through donations.

Current indicators:

- ✓ **100% of the Champions understand the information on climate change.**
- ✓ **100% of the Champions know what alleviating measures they can introduce.**
- ✓ **70% of the Champions know how to train community members on the information and methods.**

Objective 3

To heighten communities' awareness and understanding of climate change and uncertainty.

At the Champions Forum the prevalent theme was “relationships”. This was not just in terms of how people relate but rather on how the whole universe relies on mutual and positive relationships in order to thrive and how the needs of one element are easily met by the products of another. It was emphasized though that this can only happen if people learn to observe natural processes and make them work for them, become more aware of their environment and adopt environmentally friendly ways of interacting with nature, only then will nature reciprocate by being the gift that keeps on giving.

In Grahamstown Champions partnered with a youth group for an environmental cleanliness drive. There's been a big challenge with proper waste disposal in the township and this has led to littering, animals eating exposed plastic bags and dying, children exposed to hazardous material in the streets and putting their health at risk. The cleanup went hand in hand with a school drive for learners to learn more about environmental health and recycling. Recycle bins were made from old drums in collaboration with the youth group and delivered to one school in Riebeeck East where the Municipality constantly failed to fetch waste. Interactive training material was developed for learners in lower classes and Champions together with members of the youth group took turns visiting 5 schools to run sessions on environmental health and hygiene.

Current indicators.

- ✓ **90% of participants are in a position to identify the risks of climate change in their area.**
- ✓ **60% of participants understand the course content on climate change.**
- ✓ **90% of participants are in a position to analyse and assess the risks.**

Objective 4

To build the capacity of community members to adapt and cope with natural disasters and risks that will allow them to create responsive plans and make more flexible and context appropriate choices in order to reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

Umthathi Champions are operating in five Municipal areas as reflected above. Training has been run on a combined number of 772 beneficiaries spread over the five municipalities. In these Municipal communities various projects have been initiated based on community needs coupled with climate change risk assessments. Within the five Municipalities, **89 backyard gardens** have been initiated and supported by Champions in their communities, **10 community gardens** are in operation, **2 community gardens** are currently being set up, **2 nurseries** have been established, **1 waste management project** has been run successfully and a group of seven individuals are initiating indigenous plant propagation.

The highlighted were the standing results by March of 2016. After each training conducted by Champions, participants are encouraged to establish backyard gardens, the initial monitoring ascertains the establishment of the gardens and follow up monitoring looks into the state of the gardens. Unfortunately, our training didn't take into account the situational complexities of the different household gardens. This led to some gardens not thriving as they should have and some totally failing in the long run. By December 2016 we had 63 functional gardens and a little more than half of the number were in a commendable food productivity state. This happened because Champions, by then, didn't have more knowledge of site assessment in relation to climate change. That is what informed our choice of topics for the Forum.

Three community gardening projects had to shut down because scarcity of water made it difficult to carry on. In as much as coping mechanisms were part of the training on climate change, there wasn't much emphasis on how to plan properly for a garden before establishing it like taking note of water flow, wind direction, sunlight distribution etc. These were taken note of and addressed during the Champions' Forum.

Current indicators:

- ***100% of participants use water harvesting methods to collect rain and grey water.***
- ***70% of participants use water conservatively in their homes.***
- ***100% of participants have learnt to observe and identify changes to the climate.***
- ***100% of participants use organic methods of cultivation.***
- ***5% of participants experiment with collecting seeds.***
- ***80% of participants try different crops or techniques if the first crop fails.***
- ***55% of participants use sustainable cooking methods (hot boxes, solar cookers and reduction in cooking time).***
- ***35% of participants have introduced indigenous plants in their gardens.***

Objective 5

To develop and manage a results based monitoring and evaluation system for tracking the overall performance and impact of the project.

A monitoring and evaluation system has been set up to track the overall performance and impact of the project. This system enhances comparison of the previous and current status quo in relation to climate change awareness. It captures the community individual profiles which indicate individual knowledge and behavioral patterns before training as well as assessment forms which capture the impact of the training afterwards.

Monitoring visits are staggered over a two months and six months period. During these monitoring visits participants supply information through the monitoring documents which are accompanied by observations of the actual work done on the ground.

Monitoring and evaluation tracks outputs, outcomes and overall impact. All this information is analysed and aligned to the objectives and indicators to determine actual impact. From this we are able to determine whether the project is positively influencing change.

The monitoring and evaluation system has indicated the following:

- Participants are practicing permaculture.
- They are using sustainable cooking methods like the hot box and solar cooker.
- Propagation of indigenous plants is on the rise.
- Water harvesting is practiced using drums and buckets.
- 2 liter plastic bottles are being used for watering.
- Grey water is being used for watering.
- Watering occurs in the morning or late evening to reduce evaporation.
- Composting is practiced as opposed to chemical fertilisers.

Current indicators:

- ✓ *A baseline study has been conducted together with beneficiaries covering indicators, data collection methods and location of data collection.*
- ✓ *The first and second phases of monitoring have been completed in all communities.*
- ✓ *Information from the monitoring has been duly analysed for purposes of learning and adjustments as determined by impact levels.*

Objective 6

To produce a comprehensive Climate Change training manual .

A comprehensive climate change manual was to be produced by the end of June 2016. It did not end up being as comprehensive as we hoped due to two factors,

1. The costs of getting a professional for the task was higher than anticipated.
2. From the lessons learnt, it became clear that the information we had been working with, needed a major realignment if it was to be responsive to community needs and this not only spoke to the climate change aspect of our training but also had a ripple effect on the whole approach to healthy living training and thus would take more time and resources to work on.
3. As the project evolved, developing material for Champions to work with learners on environmental health and hygiene was prioritised and done.

Challenges faced during the reporting period.

Most of our areas in the Eastern Cape are semi-arid, with less 250mm rain in one year. In the coastal areas there is a lot of wind and the wind affects both plants and people. South Africa as a whole is a land of extreme weathers, it can be very hot and dry for a very long time and just as quickly become very cold and wet. In between there is always the chance of very strong winds, this means that people have to be prepared for rapidly changing challenges. Some of the more specific challenges we faced during project implementation are as follows:

- Drought (limited access to water).
- Lack of seedlings.
- Lack of gardening tools.
- Poor fencing.

- Limitations in recording project progress and challenges by beneficiaries.
- Older Champions leaving for greener pastures (great for personal development but slowing effect on project progress).
- Adapting the training to respond to needs of individual communities as ascertained through the risk assessment.
- Focusing on the strengths and passions of individual Champions when it comes to content delivery without compromising the quality of the overall project. (Overcome by partnering compatible Champions and the support of the Beneficiary Support Officer).
- The project has attracted a lot of interest from schools, especially learners, for its practical approach to climate change and this brought about the need to develop a climate change programme for schools.
- The legacy of spatial planning for Black communities in South Africa has left us with communities that were bundled into the least productive land spaces thus making it difficult for land productivity and access to resources.

Conclusion.

Given the slow improvement of the quality of life for many people, there is a growing need for individuals and communities to take responsibility of their own welfare through learning how to manage their resources in order to meet their needs and this project with Champions on Climate Change has made it clear that an improved understanding of the symbiotic nature of the relationship between human behaviour and nature is most crucial if we're to get our communities to self sufficiency stage.

GALLERY (site visits, assessment and training).

