Disaster Risk Reduction in Southern Africa: UNESCO's Response to Cyclone Idai and Kenneth

Contents

1. Background

In March and April 2019, Southern Africa was hit by two subsequent cyclones, cyclone Idai and Kenneth, that left a trail of destruction in their path . The affected countries were Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It is estimated that Cyclone Idai and subsequent flooding destroyed more than $773 million in buildings, infrastructure, and crops. More than 100,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. Cyclone Kenneth which affected mostly Mozambique is estimated to have destroyed about $100 million worth of homes, crops, and infrastructure, including boats and equipment belonging to coastal fishing villages.

As demonstrated by the impacts of these cyclones in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the capacities in the Southern African Region to address Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) are largely insufficient.

Therefore, there is a clear need to strengthen awareness of vulnerable communities, especially women, children and disabled people of the climate change related risks and to provide adequate education and training to prevent the impacts of natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and droughts. Communication is key for early warning, but also for humanitarian post-disaster relief, requiring an adequate setup of communication channels that allow a direct communication with the vulnerable communities. UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa ROSA is uniquely placed to address these issues, through the Natural and Social Sciences, Education, Cultural and Communication and Information Sectors.

2. Natural Sciences Sector

2.1 Introduction

The occurrence of natural disasters is on the rise globally due to climate change. The highest natural disasters are hydrological, climatological and meteorological. As such there is need to enhance or develop Early Warning Systems to reduce the impact of these natural disasters. The SADC Region with its six (6) coastal countries, six (6) in-land countries and four (4) island states of the South-West Indian Ocean is vulnerable to threats from tropical cyclones, which was demonstrated by the most recent tropical cyclone Idai, causing devastation in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Southern African countries are exposed to multiple recurring weather-related hazards, such as cyclones, droughts, floods, and related epidemics. Droughts affect the food-energy-water nexus, with a compounding negative effect on livelihoods. Recurring floods damage property, infrastructure, and disrupt lives, often causing a high human toll. The impacts of these hazards are often intertwined, generating multiple crisis that affect the most vulnerable communities, putting a strain on their recovery potential.

In the case of Southern Africa, historical evidence and General Circulation Models (GCMs) clearly show that the continent is experiencing increased droughts and floods. Therefore, there is an urgent need in the region to address human and institutional capacities to equip countries with means to shift towards a proactive flood and drought risk management.

The Natural Science Sector through its Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) is therefore promoting capacity development of regional and national authorities as well as educational institutions in Southern Africa on issues related to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and preparedness. Focus has been given to strengthening the Monitoring and Early Warning Systems (MEWS) of the member countries as well as supporting developments of flood and drought monitoring tools embedded in National Frameworks for Climate Services.

2.2 Activities in Response to Cyclone Idai and Kenneth

2.2.1 Flood and Drought Monitor and Early Warning

Regional Level

In 2011, UNESCO and Princeton University developed the African Flood and Drought Monitor (AFDM), capable of monitoring and predicting periods of drought, flooding or other extreme events by providing real-time data for 16 meteorological and hydrological variables, allowing users to visualise and interact with region-specific data.

As indicated in Figure 1, the Monitor uses available satellite remote sensing and in-situ information, a hydrologic modelling platform and a web-based user interface for operational river flow monitoring. Based on macro-scale hydrologic modelling, the system ingests available data to provide real-time assessment of the water cycle and flood hazards and puts this in the context of the long-term record dating back to 1950. Hydrological forecasts are provided up to 7 days in advance, while drought early warning is available up to 6 to 9 months in advance. The predictive skill of the system has been evaluated for 30 years of historic hindcasts and shows potential for providing useful forecasts of developing flood conditions.

National Level

Although the regional AFDM provided useful forecasting information at the regional level, it gives limited details for individual countries in the SADC Region. The current spatial resolution of 25 km is insufficient to cover all required details to adequately monitor and forecast river levels in SADC individual countries and would need to be tailored specifically. Therefore, there is a need for the development of national high-resolution flood and drought monitors using a similar approach as the regional version, but implemented using a higher resolution (5 km) and a calibration and validation procedure incorporating the operational monitoring stations, as well as assimilation of real-time precipitation and discharge monitoring stations for enhanced model performance.

National versions of the Monitor were developed for Zimbabwe in November 2019 and for Mozambique in February 2020, to strengthen climate risk management in the countries. Figure 2 presents the Flood and Drought Monitor of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The pilot Flood and Drought Monitor provides a platform to monitor and provide forecasts of upcoming flood and drought hazards at a time when the countries are battling with El Niño- and La Niña-induced droughts and floods, resulting in the loss of lives and properties, and acutely affecting the already stressed economies. These monitors, which strengthen proactive climate risk management in Southern Africa, contribute towards the establishment of Frameworks for National Climate Services.

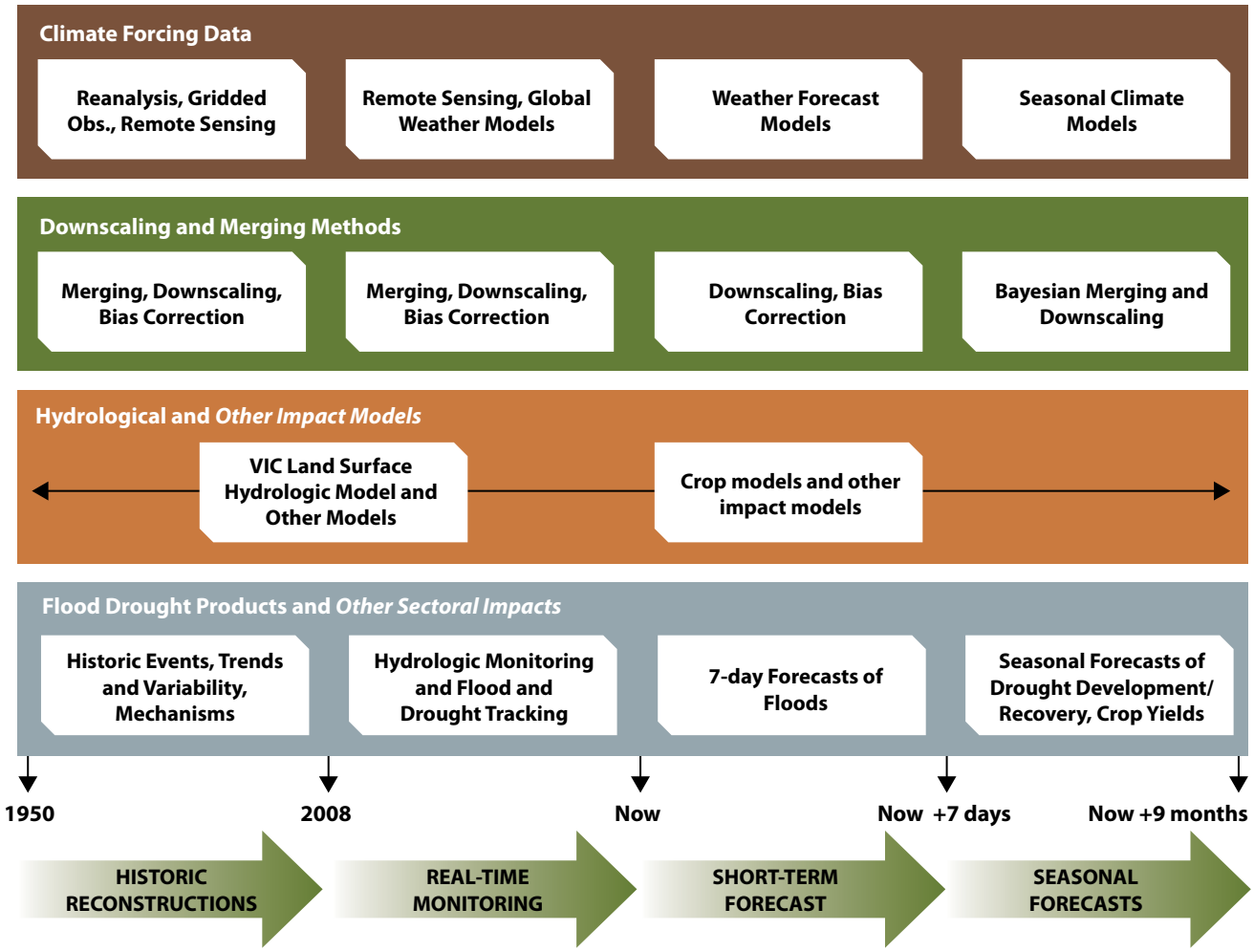


Figure 1: Flowchart of the African Flood and Drought Monitor

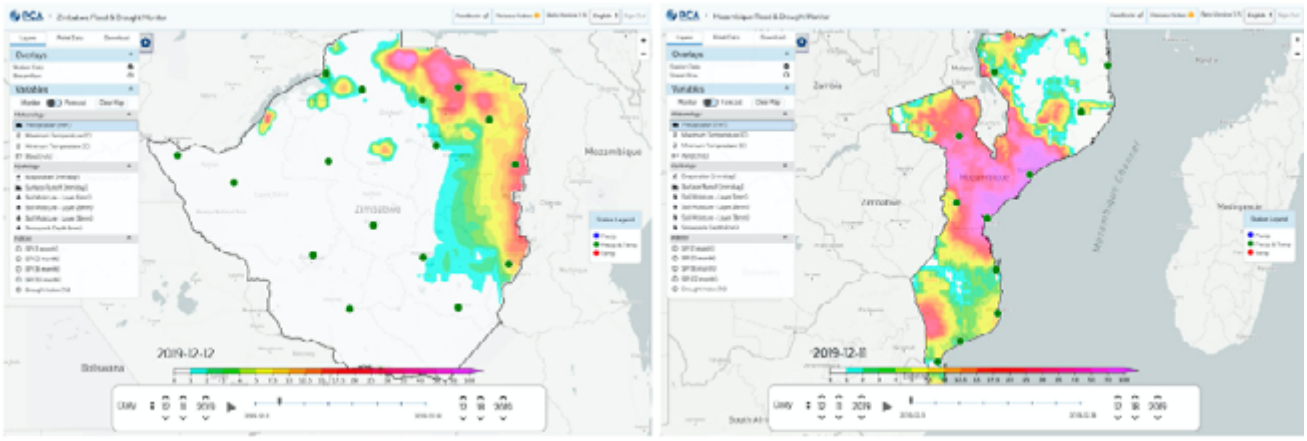


Figure 2: Zimbabwe (left) and Mozambique (right) Flood and Drought Monitors

The Zimbabwe Flood and Drought Monitor and Early Warning was launched during a workshop on 25-26 November 2019 and counted with more than 100 participants. This workshop was aimed at developing and strengthening the capacity for disaster preparedness and resilience to extreme hydro-meteorological phenomena in Zimbabwe, through the establishment of a user-friendly high-resolution system that predicts risks and consequences of floods and droughts. The launch also marked the beginning of the validation process and transfer of the technology/monitor to the relevant national stakeholders.

A similar workshop was organised on 17-19 February 2020 in Mozambique with the aim to support the country to prepare better for hydrological disasters by means of early warning systems. A pilot version of the Mozambique Flood and Drought Monitor was launched, and more than 90 participants were trained on the early warning tool.

2.3 Way Forward

2.3.1 Towards a Community Centred Flood Early Warning System for SADC Countries

As demonstrated during the recent flood episode in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, flood monitoring and early warning is largely insufficient, resulting in an acute threat to human security. Since it is expected that climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of cyclones in the region, the flood risk in the country will further increase in the following decades. There is therefore a need to strengthen the capacity of the national actors to develop adequate flood hazard monitoring and forecasting capabilities, as well as to count with the required communication channels and protocols to identify and communicate the threats to vulnerable communities and provide adequate pro-active response mechanisms.

UNESCO therefore developed the concept of a Community Centred Flood Early Warning System, along six work packages (Figure 3) to improve the flood disaster risk reduction capabilities of the countries. Building on an exhaustive identification of local vulnerabilities to flood hazards using state-of-the-art and very high-resolution remote sensing assessment techniques, adequate forecasting technology for short-term predictions will be put in place, as well as the communication infrastructure and protocols for generating relevant flood early-warning information to stakeholders and decision makers. In close collaboration with all national actors involved, the community-based flood early warning system will also be better integrated into a national flood risk management strategies. As such, the approach aims at developing an encompassing solution to the lack of preparation and foresight that has led to the huge impact the flooding has caused in the aftermath of the Cyclone Idai, providing the capacity to significantly reduce the threat to human life in future flooding occurrences.

2.3.2 Ongoing Fundraising Efforts

As part of this process, a donor and stakeholder event was organized in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, to engage potential donors to support the ongoing effort to establish effective Monitoring and Early Warning Systems in Southern Africa.

Currently, two new projects have emerged from this effort, that have a particular focus on the UNESCO designed Biosphere Reserves in the Southern Africa counties, which has received active support from the Government of Flanders for an amount of up to 2.3 Million USD. Active engagements with additional donors is expected to further strengthen this much needed implementation in the next two years.

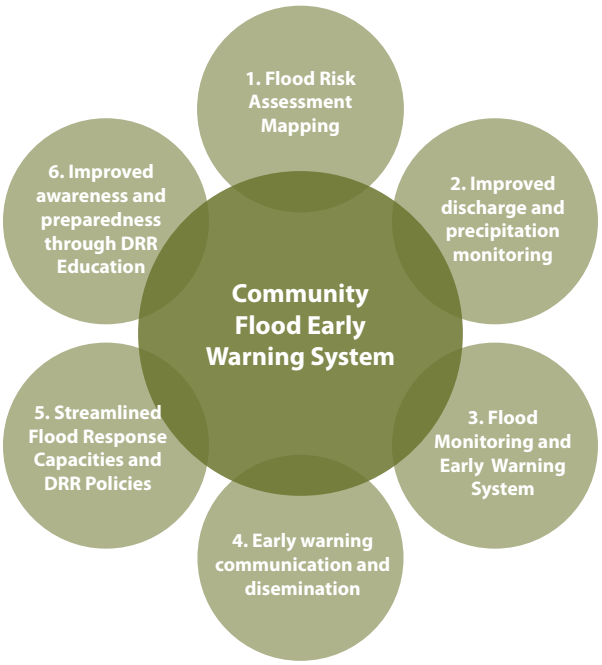


Figure 3: The Different Components Required for the Development of a Community Based Integrated Flood Early Warning System

3. Education Sector

3.1 Introduction

Disasters can damage or destroy school facilities and educational systems, threatening the physical safety and psychological well-being of communities and interrupting educational continuity. Furthermore, disasters reduce school enrollment, as children are kept out of school to help with livelihood activities. Such outcomes are likely to affect girls and children with disabilities disproportionately.

Disaster risk reduction through education can change patterns of behavior that reduce the risks and costs of disasters and produce long-term benefits. Education can also increase capacities to reduce overall vulnerability to disaster by teaching environmental stewardship, the potential hazards that communities face, how to reduce disaster risks and skills needed in the event of a disaster. By observing building standards for disaster-resistant school construction and practicing evacuation plans, the education sector can decrease the risk of physical collapse and the associated material, economic and human life loss.

The overall goal of DRR education is to protect learners and education workers from physical harm in schools as well as to assure educational continuity when faced with hazards and safeguarding education sector investments. Through DRR in school curricula and classroom teacher, DRR education ultimately aims at strengthening the knowledge, skills and values leading to climate-smart disaster resilience among learners and school communities.

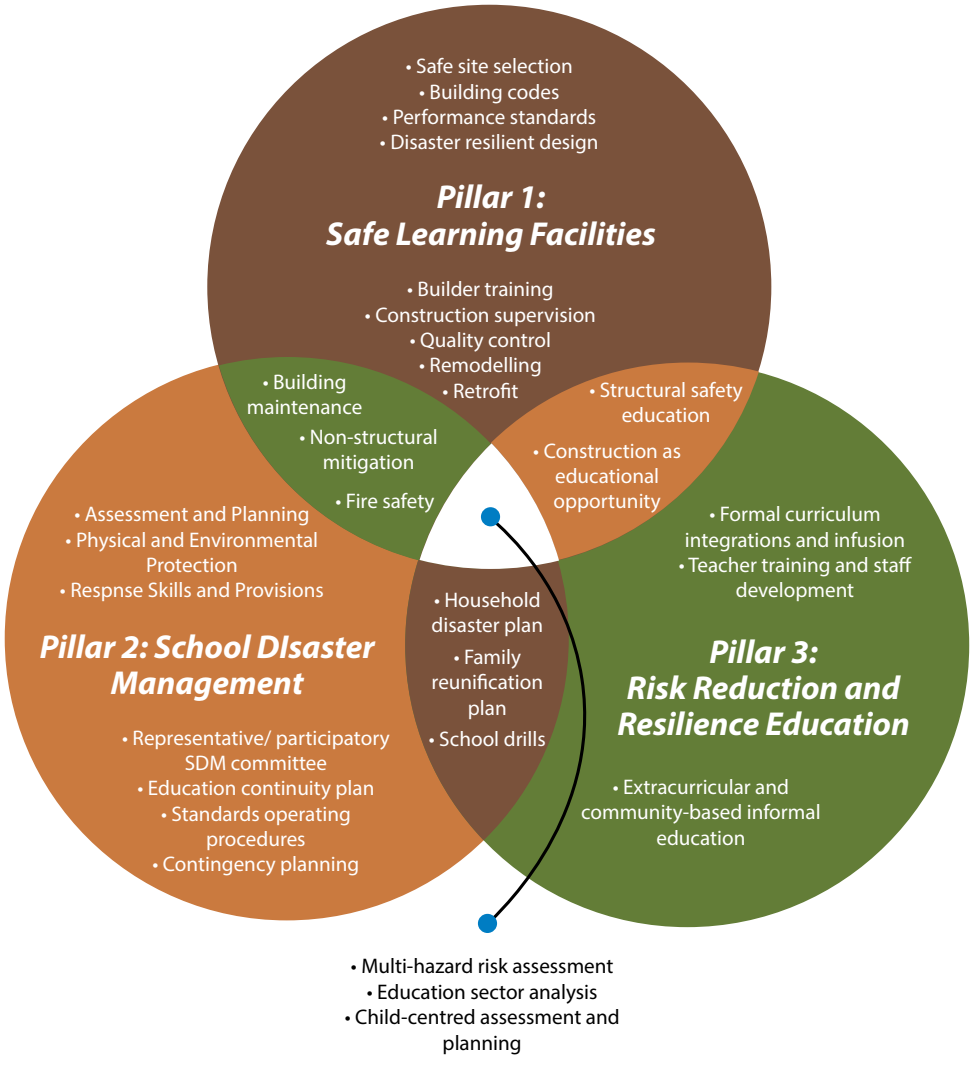


Figure 4: Education Sector Policies and Plans Aligned to National, Subnational and Local Disaster Management Plans

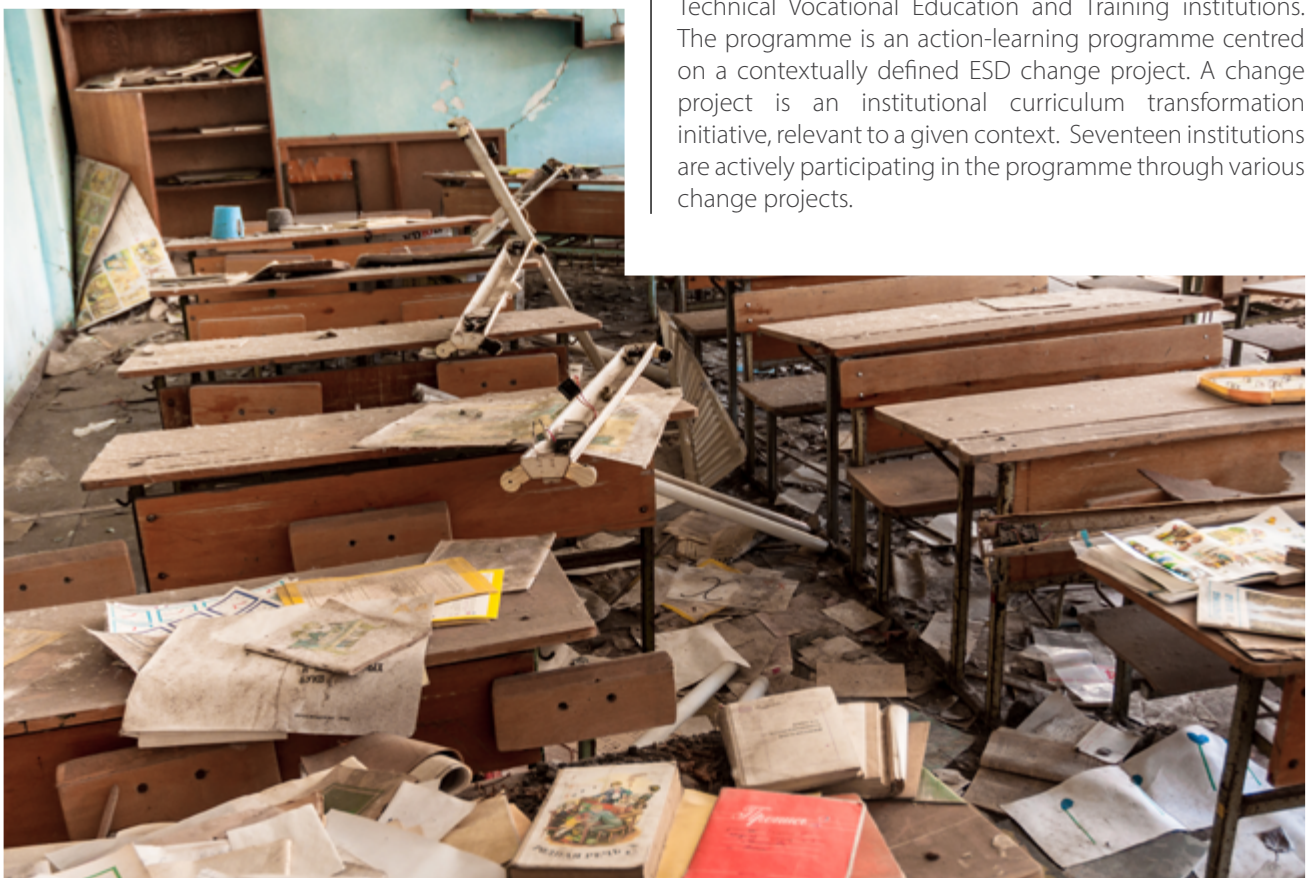
3.2 Activities in Response to Cyclone Idai and Kenneth

3.2.1 Comprehensive School Safety

UNESCO encourages countries to adopt a comprehensive approach to school safety which has been articulated and agreed upon by leading UN agencies and International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGOs) working together to counter the risks.

Comprehensive school safety includes three pillars that contribute to ensuring the preparedness and safety of the education system and learners:

- **Safe Educational Facilities:** including site selection, safe access (functionality), safe construction and retrofit (global structural and local structural), and non-structural safety;
- **Disaster Management:** including standard operating procedures, ongoing school-based planning for risk reduction and educational continuity, drills, ***etc.***; and
- **Disaster Prevention and Risk Reduction Education:** the integration of DRR into teaching and learning, including DRR in formal school curricula and non-formal education within the framework of Education for Sustainable Development.



3.2.2 Capacity Building on ESD and DRR Education in Southern Africa

UNESCO provides technical guidance on DRR to policy makers and builds capacity of education planners and curriculum developers on comprehensive schools safety.

UNESCO developed a four-day training course aiming to 1) increase the capacity of curriculum developers and educational planners to integrate DRR education in school curricula; 2) support the revision/development/improvement of school disaster management plans; 3) train and guide decision-makers to improve the resilience of schools facilities and 4) support the development of action plans for the implementation of the comprehensive school safety approach in each country. A first training session benefitted 45 education planners, education infrastructure planners, and curriculum developers from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi was held in March 2020.

UNESCO further promotes and builds capacity on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) including Climate change and DRR

A Capacity building programme on ESD for teacher educators is implemented in 11 countries in Southern Africa. The aim is to strengthen implementation of ESD in teacher education institutions for teacher educators from Early Childhood Care and Education, Primary, Secondary and Technical Vocational Education and Training institutions. The programme is an action-learning programme centred on a contextually defined ESD change project. A change project is an institutional curriculum transformation initiative, relevant to a given context. Seventeen institutions are actively participating in the programme through various change projects.

4. Social and Human Sciences Sector

4.1 Introduction

The Social and Human Sciences (SHS) sector approach to DRR is centered on promoting Human Rights based interventions for the most commonly "left behind" population groups during disaster preparedness and post recovery interventions. The approach is to focus on strengthening ongoing responses targeting persons with disabilities in disaster-affected areas.

The limited availability of in-depth information and disaggregated data on persons with disabilities affected by and those who have acquired disabilities due to the Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe has resulted in the exclusion of one of the most marginalised groups in post-disaster initiatives, including rebuilding and recovery interventions. This population was hardly visible in the public and the media discourse around the recovery operations after the cyclone.

SHS saw an opportunity to focus on this particular target group with the overall objective to highlight the needs of persons with disabilities in disasters – Cyclone Idai in particular – and support Government and development partners in ensuring disability inclusion in DRR.

A field visit conducted in the framework of the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) project to one of the Cyclone Idai affected sites in Chimanimani in June 2019 found out the following:

- There were evident gaps in ongoing Recovery interventions based on information gathered from existing UN Agency Early Recovery Needs Assessment, Situation Analysis (e.g. UNFPA ESARO sub-Regional Report, IOM Situation Analysis Report, bilateral meetings by UNESCO with Disability Affairs Department within the Zimbabwe Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare).
- Low reporting in media coverage/reporting on persons with disabilities affected by Cyclone Idai (https://www.herald.co.zw/deafening-silence-on-disability-cyclone-idai/)
- There was recognition of the increased risk and vulnerability to various issues (such as Gender-Based Violence, mobility of persons with disabilities in current hazardous geographic terrain etc.)
- There was concern by stakeholders over the limited responses targeting persons with disabilities, as well as limited knowledge on how to plan and deliver inclusive interventions in current Post-Recovery Responses.

4.2 Activities in Response to Cyclone Idai

4.2.1 Documenting Experiences and Needs of Persons with Disabilities Affected by Cyclone Idai in Bikita, Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts

SHS enlisted the services of Christian Blind Mission, a Disability Services Organization (DSO) and a film production company to conduct field research on persons with disabilities affected by Cyclone Idai in Bikita, Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts and produce a high quality **documentary film** and **infographics** based on evidence contained in the documentary. The documentary film and infographics clearly underlines the following key issues:

1. Need for disability disaggregated data
2. Persons with disabilities requiring assistive devices and psycho-social support
3. Ensuring accessibility and reasonable accommodation in rebuilding/recovery initiatives
4. Ensuring social inclusion and full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in the disaster preparedness measures and in post-disaster recovery governance

UNESCO also partnered with the World Food Programme (WFP) to access data con disability collected during food distribution in early response in Chimanimani and Chipinge. The awareness raising resources entitled ***Leaving No-one Behind: The Case of Persons with Disabilities in the wake of Cyclone Idai*** were shared at various platforms including at a meeting in Mozambique and they raised awareness on the need for disability inclusive DRR.

The resources available here https://en.unesco.org/news/hear-us-too-how-improve-lives-and-rights-persons-disabilities-zimbabwe

4.2.2 Donor/Partner Engagement Meeting - Challenges and Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in Cyclone Idai Affected Areas in Zimbabwe

On the 16th of December 2019, SHS organized a meeting to engage donors and partners, and present the awareness raising material and testimonies from local government officials, development partners and persons with disabilities affected by Cyclone Idai in Chimanimani, Chipinge and Bikita. The main objective of the meeting

was to highlight the dire challenges faced by and needs of persons with disabilities affected by Cyclone Idai and to engage discussions on the types and scale of efforts that are needed to ensure inclusive disaster preparedness and post-disaster recovery interventions.

The meeting increased awareness among key government ministries, embassies and diplomatic missions as well as development actors on the needs of persons with disabilities in Cyclone Idai affected areas and mobilise stakeholder networks towards building disability inclusive early warning systems and post –disaster recovery and rebuilding. More particularly, the UNOPS project team in charge of implementing a reconstruction Programme funded by World Bank and the African Development Bank expressed its interest to collaborate to include disability rights in the programme.

4.3 Way Forward

SHS continues to engage stakeholders in the disability sector and donors to strengthen disability inclusive DRR in the region. Based on the work in Cyclone Idai affected areas, SHS contributed to an assessment conducted by the World Bank Group, which is expected to contribute towards building the capacity of the Civil Protection Unit in the Government of Zimbabwe to strengthen disability inclusion in DRR. SHS is now also involved in the UN Humanitarian Protection Cluster to contribute on Disability Inclusion in the UN Joint Efforts.

With regard to resource mobilization, SHS has successfully raised 117,000 USD from the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) in June 2020. This fund comes as complementary to the ongoing UNPRPD project, focusing specifically on integrating disability inclusion and rights in the upcoming UN Joint planning process, including on humanitarian response.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5. Culture Sector

5.1 Introduction

It is clear that culture has a powerful contribution to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Indeed, culture has an important role to play in creating green jobs, reducing poverty, making cities more sustainable, providing safe access to water and food, preserving the resources of oceans and forests, and even strengthening the resilience of communities in the face of adversities, be they natural disasters or human induced conflicts. In addition, reference is also made to the intrinsic value of culture as a repository of symbols and identity. Loss of cultural assets (e.g. places of worship, rituals and traditions) has great psychological impact on human beings, which may seriously affect their ability to cope with and recover from difficult situations.

Integrating culture into recovery programmes, either following a disaster or in response to fragility and crisis, fundamentally contributes to their effectiveness and sustainability while also enhancing ownership by target beneficiaries. In this respect, culture can be understood as an 'enabler' and a cross-cutting consideration to be mainstreamed within all sectoral assessments, similarly to aspects such as gender equality, governance or disaster risk reduction. However, the culture element is most of the times missing in recovery strategies. Carrying out Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) for the Culture Sector is often challenging, culture being a broad concept encompassing a very wide range of elements, from a community's identify-enforcing rituals, which contribute to social cohesion, to national iconic heritage sites representing deep-rooted cultural reference points.

The tropical cyclones in Southern Africa (Idai and Kenneth in 2019) highlighted the increased risks and vulnerabilities to the culture sector, which further affects other social and economic dimensions of the impacted territories and communities. The disasters affected the vibrant cultural life and the quality of urban environments, heavily damaged cultural infrastructures where some were perceived to be key civic spaces for dialogue and social inclusion and important parts for achieving sustainable cities. This reinforced the fact that there is need to develop a clear inter-sectoral management system at country levels that can with little or no delay react in terms of safeguarding both historical/heritage as well as developmental aspects of cultural assets. Timely interventions are of paramount importance in the event of an emergency when multiple interventions across all sectors take place simultaneously.

Regarding the impact of such disasters at the macro-economic level, much of the economic activity associated to the culture sector of the concerned countries takes place in the informal sector and is therefore not reflected in the national statistics. As most of the sites of historical and cultural significance are recoverable, it is believed that the losses in revenues related culture, and in particular to cultural and creative industries (CCIs), can be closely linked with losses incurred in the tourism market.

Culture Sector implements a dual strategy of assisting countries in the needs assessment on the impacts on culture and resource mobilization for recovery and risk resilient measures for culture resources. Post-cyclone needs assessment for cultural heritage were conducted in Malawi and Mozambique mainly to gather data on damaged or destroyed heritage. Heritage professionals in the respective Department of Arts and Culture undertook on-site surveys of the listed cultural heritage in the affected districts to identify the damage caused by the cyclone. Based on the collected data, the assessment teams produced situational overview reports which were used for the classification and degree of damage to the surveyed structures to aid in the prioritization of subsequent restoration efforts.

5.2 Activities in response to Cyclones

5.2.1 Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) for Culture Sector in Mozambique

Needs Assessment of the damage and losses caused by Cyclone Kenneth was conducted in Cabo Delgado and Nampula Provinces The objective of the PDNA exercise in Malawi undertaken from 22 November to 1 December 2019 was to collect data to understand the damage to cultural heritage and losses of the affected people of the two provinces, particularly, cultural practitioners and their activities; and design a recovery strategy and project proposal to address the findings of the present needs assessment.

Items assessed in the culture sector over the four days were divided in five components:

1. Built Heritage, Culture/Natural Sites, and Monuments;
2. Moveable Heritage, Repositories, and Institutions;
3. Intangible Cultural Heritage;
4. Cultural and Creative Industries; and
5. Cultural Public Administration

Below is the summary of the mission findings:

1. The total needs for recovery in the culture sector in the assessed areas amounted to 610.000 USD.
2. The team noted the delay in which this assessment has been undertaken and took into consideration the short-term interventions already carried out by individuals and organizations as well as the governmental entities.

3. The aspect of DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) was been identified as interdisciplinary (inclusive of cultural resources) and of high importance for the affected areas. A separate DRR concept note is being drafted as a pilot focusing the assessed areas but easily applicable to any other area of Mozambique.
4. Following the terrorist attacks in the Cabo Delgado (continental) area during the assessment mission (end November), the team observed an increased migration of population towards the Quirimbas islands, which will have an important effect on the sustainable use of natural resources and which can exacerbate the still existing effects of the cyclones of 2019. In the prospect of possible natural disasters, the intervention for stabilization and resilience building is therefore of utmost importance.
5. A separate concept note was prepared in order to speed up the resources' identification and implementation of the necessary assistance to the cultural sector in the assessed areas.

The overall impact on the culture sector corresponds to the decrease in percentage of the sector's contribution to national GDP and potential losses of cultural good exports, main components of macro-economic impacts are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Assessment of Macro-economic Impact on Culture

Macro-economic Components Calculation of the Economic Value of the Effects	Calculation of the Economic Value of the Effects
Losses in revenues incurred by the private and public sectors caused by the destruction of culture assets	Analysis of GDP impact
Costs of temporary works for protecting cultural assets and costs of demolition and debris removal	Analysis of GDP impact
Foreign exchange losses due to temporary absence of foreign visitors to culture sites	Analysis of the balance of payments (BOP) impact
imported components of the culture assets reconstruction or repairs (including materials, equipment and machinery and expertise) that are not produced in country and must be imported from abroad	Analysis of impact on the BOP
Reinsurance proceeds that may come from abroad to cover the cost of any destroyed culture assets that were insured	Analysis on the fiscal position
Higher expenditures and lower revenues that will affect the government´s budget due to the losses caused by the disaster	Analysis on the fiscal position
Any possible loss of employment caused by the destruction of culture assets – excluding those that belong to formal sectors of economic activity such as tourism, commerce, etc.– that will affect workers of cultural activities	Analysis of overall employment and personal Income impact

5.2.2 Heritage Emergency Preparedness and Response Trainings

UNESCO organized a Sub-Regional Workshop on Heritage Emergency and Preparedness Response from 1 - 3 October 2019 in Maputo Mozambique. The workshop brought together directors and technical staff with responsibility of emergency preparedness and response in the ministries responsible for culture from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The workshop provided a platform for exchange of experience acquired during post events of the recent disasters among Southern African Countries. Participants were acquainted with formats and methodologies to support Disaster Risk Reductions (DRR) and presentation at country level. During the workshop, experts from UNESCO unpacked a complex "tool box" that composed of standard setting instruments such as the international legal instruments that enable states to protect all forms of culture effectively and UNESCO Preparedness and Response Programme. In his remarks, the UNESCO country office Director, Mr Paul Gomis, made a recommendation for participants to train themselves to understand disasters and better respond to them, as experts, participants were supposed to support their superiors on the importance of integrating culture into national emergency programmes.

General Objectives of the meeting were to:

- Provide a platform for exchange of experience acquired in the recent disasters, and other emergency situations among Southern African countries;
- Raise awareness about best practices and available mechanisms to preserve cultural heritage in times of emergencies;
- Explore possibilities of developing main lines of action supporting emergency preparedness and response processes at country level. These will be based on the UNESCO's approved Programme and will mainly include elements of the following standard setting instruments and programmes such as:
  - UNESCO 1954 Convention on Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols
  - UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
  - UNIDROIT 1995 Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.
  - UNESCO Emergency Preparedness and Response programme
  - UNESCO Museums Programme

Outputs of the workshop included:

- Understanding of the policy contexts (country and sub-regional) aimed at strengthening synergies among the relevant UNESCO cultural Conventions in relation to heritage and emergencies.
- Participants developed a common understanding about different stages of the disaster management cycle, i.e. preparedness, immediate field assessment, rapid response as well as the recovery and rehabilitation.
- Participants' committed to verify and improve national heritage inventories as well as risk assessment and emergency plans for cultural institutions and heritage properties, including sites, Museums and archives.
- Suggestion for development of capacity building materials and resources, based on lessons learned, and their integration in capacity-building programmes in disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness for cultural and natural heritage.
- Participants recommended a sub-regional meeting on digitalization of museums, with an extended group to learn the status of the issue in each country.

6. Communication and Information Sector

6.1 Introduction

The media has a critical role to play in disaster risk reduction as highlighted in The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which calls the media to take an active and inclusive role at the local, national, regional and global levels in contributing to the raising of public awareness and understanding of disasters. The framework highlights the media's role in disseminating accurate and non-sensitive disaster risk, hazard and disaster information, including on small-scale disasters, in a simple, transparent, easy-to-understand and accessible manner, in close cooperation with national authorities.

The media can be an important platform to disseminate vital information before, during and after disasters. The media can also facilitate linkages between affected communities, disaster response organisations and the government. A good example of the role of media in disaster management is on how citizens mobilised themselves to assist families whose lives were devastated by Cyclone IDAI. Most of the citizen centric media interventions were facilitated through social media. In Zimbabwe for instance, stories were shared, images were shared and rallying calls were issued and citizens responded, all on social media.

Targeting the media in disaster response will also strengthen communities' ability to prepare for and respond to disasters. For instance, the use of Community Radio in Disaster Risk reduction has a potential to capitalise on local knowledge and expertise, can be cost effective, and may be likely to create local ownership of processes and empower people to deal with the situation at hand. Research shows that understanding and leveraging social capital already available on the ground can greatly reduce disaster risk at community level.

Given that community radio stations are the only tier of the media which has the closest proximity to the communities they serve; are accessible in the local languages or dialects, which is very important in avoiding errors of communication; and can reach the entire local geography, it should be readily evident that community radio stations represent an important opportunity to reduce community vulnerabilities to disaster. It can therefore be argued that Community Radio should be an integral part of any processes that focus on community-based DRR. For the media (legacy media and new media) to take its place as an effective partner in disaster mitigation and response, effective mechanisms have to be established between the sector and the stakeholders involved in disaster management.

6.2 Activities in Response to Cyclone Idai and Kenneth

6.2.1 Media Assessments Post Cyclone IDAI and Kenneth

Post Cyclone IDAI, it was important to assess the capacities of media, including local and provincial media professionals, humanitarian actors and duty-bearers in the Cyclone IDAI affected areas to identify best practices, case studies and lessons learnt for the media to be able to coordinate a more effective response in times of crisis and disaster in the future. In this regard, the Communication and Information Sector CI commissioned and funded assessments for Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Findings from the Zimbabwe assessment showed that the media were reactive rather than proactive as only 6 of the 16 media houses monitored carried news of Cyclone IDAI before it hit Zimbabwe. The majority of articles written were on disaster response by the various stakeholders as compared to preparedness and prevention. Male voices dominated the narrative with fewer women speaking at all levels. Only 14% of the respondents had received prior training on reporting on disasters or any other type of humanitarian situation. The Zimbabwe Assessment report was validated by Media stakeholders and the Zimbabwe Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services. during World Radio Day in Gweru in February 2020 and thereafter during a Disaster Risk Reduction workshop in Maputo.

The Malawi assessment showed that prior to Cyclone IDAI, the Meteorological department engaged media to warn people on the impending danger. During the cyclone media coverage was high particularly by community media. Lack of resources to visit affected areas impacted the media's capacity to report on the cyclone. It was noted a good rapport between the media and all government and non-government entities is required for efficient reporting and better coordination of disaster risk management efforts.

It is evident from the Zimbabwe and Malawi assessments that the media's role in DRR needs to be strengthened as the media is not viewed as a partner in addressing prepardness and prevention. The media has to be engaged before any disaster strikes so they are a part of the process from the onset not for them to be engaged after the disaster strikes.

6.3 Way Forward

6.3.1 Strengthening Media Role in DRR

To address the media challenges and needs identified through the Zimbabwe and Malawi assessments, it is important for capacity strengthening of the media to be done through training on climate change, disaster relief, recovery and rehabilitation. The following actions need to be taken to strengthen the media's role in DRR:

- National and local level communication mechanisms, should be harnessed to engage with the media to respond to disasters..
- Assessment on the resilience of the infrastructure for communication (and media) establishments, their business continuity plans; disaster response protocols; human resources capacity; gender responsiveness and programming for minority groups..
- Strengthen investigative and public interest journalism capacities to deal with issues and underlying challenges, which may not be visible during emergency responses.
- Strengthen collaboration with meteorological departments and organisations with mandate for disaster response; programming on disaster risk reduction.
- Strengthen trauma healing programming in media houses, particularly in community media.
- Establishment of new media operations should take considerations of emergency and disaster situations (e.g. locations, spectrum allocations, sharing of towers etc)
- The Media should establish active engagement with local and central government authorities on issues around disaster preparedness, emergency response, rescue and rehabilitation;
- Support relief operations for the community (e.g. storage space for clean water, or coordination with other organisations engaged in relief operations).
- Support media houses to develop business continuity plans, in-house policies and protocols
- Establishing infrastructure for field communication with community members
- Support media organisations with wireless networks as backup for communications
- Create temporary linkages between community radios wireless networks with those used by the Police department and/or the district administration
- Strategic distribution of FM radio units to communities (e.g. through radio clubs etc)
- Strengthen the role of communication in PDNAs and Early Action Protocols.

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