

Assessing the Impacts of COVID 19 and Climate Change on Vulnerable Women in Central Portland Bight, Jamaica



Figure 1: Participants at GPN workshop

REPORT ON STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP and WEBINAR

Date: 26 January 2021

Venue: Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation,
Lionel Town, Clarendon, Jamaica and on Zoom.

Prepared by: Ann Haynes-Sutton Ph.D.

For: Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM)

Funded by: Global Partnership Network (GPN)



DAAD



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Assessing the Impacts of COVID 19 and Climate Change on Vulnerable Women in Central Portland Bight, Jamaica.....	1
LIST OF FIGURES	3
LIST OF TABLES	4
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT	4
BACKGROUND	5
OBJECTIVES.....	5
Learning goals of the workshop	5
Target audience of the workshop	6
METHODS	7
RESULTS.....	8
Question 1: How vulnerable are livelihoods and welfare of women in Portland Bight to climate change? What are the impediments to addressing these issues and how can these impediments be addressed?.....	8
Reasons for negative responses.....	8
Reasons for positive responses	9
Suggestions for actions that could improve the situation	9
Question 2: How is COVID-19 affecting women in Portland Bight? What factors are making it difficult for women to respond? What can be done?	11
Reasons for negative responses:.....	11
Reasons for positive responses:	11
CONCLUSIONS	12
LITERATURE CITED.....	13
APPENDIX 1: Agenda	14
APPENDIX 2: LIST OF ATTENDEES	Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.
APPENDIX 3: WORKSHOP NOTES	Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.
APPENDIX 4: WORKSHOP EVALUATION	Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.
APPENDIX 5: WORKSHOP MATERIALS.....	Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Participants at GPN workshop	1
Figure 2: Participants reading workshop materials before the start of the event	6
Figure 3: Remote participant on Zoom	7
Figure 4: Assessment of the preparation and content of the workshop... Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.	
Figure 5: Assessment of workshop content..... Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.	

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Scores for climate change vulnerability	8
Table 2: Scores for vulnerability to COVID-19.....	11

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

C-CAM	Caribbean Coastal Area Foundation
GPN	Global Partnership Network
VRA	Vulnerability Reduction Assessment

BACKGROUND

This workshop/webinar entitled “*Impact of COVID 19 and Climate Change on Vulnerable Women in Central Portland Bight, Jamaica*” was held as part of Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM)’s commitment to promoting sustainable livelihoods, climate change adaptation and improving the quality of life of the vulnerable residents of the Portland Bight Protected Area. It is part of a larger project that is being implemented in partnership with The University of Kassel, represented by the president, acting for and through its Global Partnership Network (GPN).

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the workshop was to engage key stakeholders to work together to develop practical suggestions to address the impact of COVID 19 and climate change on vulnerable women in central Portland Bight, Jamaica. By engaging the stakeholders from the earliest stages of project identification and development ensure maximum relevance to the real problems that are being faced by the group. We will use the Vulnerability Reduction Assessment approach (Crane Droesch *et al.* 2008) to ensure the full participation of the stakeholders in the process. In particular we wanted to use the Vulnerability Reduction Assessment (VRA) methodology to elicit information from the community members about how they felt that climate change and COVID-19 were affecting them already and what they thought could be done in the future to reduce the impacts. C-CAM expects to use the results to inform future actions to sustainably address the issues raised by the participants.

Learning goals of the workshop

The learning goals of the workshop were:

- What is Climate Change and how is it affecting Portland Bight?
 - Update regarding general risks of COVID 19
 - Identification of risks to women in light of impacts of Climate Change and COVID19
 - Understanding how combined risks might be different for men and women and why.
- These goals were achieved through an envisioning session with participants to help them to identify how they can work to reduce risks including collaborative development of project ideas to support joint initiatives to reduce impacts on vulnerable groups of women.



Figure 2: Participants reading workshop materials before the start of the event

Target audience of the workshop

The target audience was 15 –20 vulnerable women from communities in Central Portland Bight Protected Area and C-CAM staff. The actual participants included 12 community members, 3 C-CAM staff (one of whom is also a community member) plus 4 presenters (Appendix 1).



Figure 3: Remote participant on Zoom

METHODS

The meeting was held partly in person at the Lionel Town office of C-CAM and partly online on Zoom.

The workshop/webinar was facilitated by Ingrid Parchment (Executive Director C-CAM) and Ann Sutton (consultant). It started with introductory presentations from various government agencies including Climate Change Division (Nelsa English and Indi Mclymont Lafayette) National Environment and Planning Agency (Andre Bingham), and the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment & Sports (Sharon Coburn Robinson). The Ministry of Health & Wellness was invited and they joined via Zoom, however they were not able to stay on (perhaps due to Internet instability). Presentations focused on climate change and COVID-19 and their implications for women in Jamaica. Workshop materials that were provided to the participants included leaflets on climate change.

After the presentations we played a video by Voices for Climate Change. This was followed by the VRA exercise. We followed this exercise with a discussion of what people would like to see in the project. We compared the findings with previous VRA exercises held with men and women in Portland Bight in 2009-2011 (Haynes-Sutton 2009, 2011).

The Agenda is included in Appendix 1, the list of participants in Appendix 2, the workshop notes in Appendix 3, evaluation in Appendix 4 and the climate change leaflets produced for the project in Appendix 5.

RESULTS

Question 1: How vulnerable are livelihoods and welfare of women in Portland Bight to climate change? What are the impediments to addressing these issues and how can these impediments be addressed?

Mean score: Very bad 1.6

Table 1: Scores for climate change vulnerability

Score	Category	# Responses	Weighted response	Average
Very bad	1	7	7	
Bad	2	3	6	
Moderate	3	2	6	
Good	4			
Very good	5			
TOTAL		12	19	1.6

Reasons for negative responses

The participants assessed their vulnerability and their capability to take action to address these issues as very bad (Table 1). This was unchanged from a previous VRA (which included men and women and focused on hurricane damage) in 2009.

The reasons for their negative responses in 2021 (Appendix 2) included the risks of loss of life, houses, income and livestock, damage to mangroves and food shortages due to drought.

Price increases following natural disasters (and COVID) meant that women could not buy as much food as before but men did not understand this or increase allowances to compensate for shortfalls.

There were many problems related to the operation and use of shelters. They noted that women and children are more likely to come to the shelters than men. Problems faced by shelter managers included stealing supplies and damage to the premises, while home owners dreaded looting of homes while they were in the shelters. The looting is mostly done by men, but women are complicit in receiving the stolen items.

In preparation for impending storms the men lead with the battening down, while the women secure documents and important items, look after the children and cook.

Recovery and restoration following hurricanes is led by men, who do the heavy work (such as carrying water and reassembling houses), with the assistance of women. Compensation for losses and damage to houses was received, but since the men are mainly the heads of households, the money went to them, and they did not always spend

it appropriately. Community leaders reported that sometimes their efforts are misunderstood and resented by the communities they serve, who assume they are being paid or otherwise benefiting. Sometimes this leads to them being threatened with violence.

Water supply: The availability of potable water is a major issue in these communities. Water has to be purchased. Women usually pay for it. Men will help by driving to water sources to collect water.

Livelihoods based on fishing: Traditionally the main source of income in these communities is fishing, but due to climate change and hurricane damage fish populations are declining. Most of the fishing is done by men, while women sell the fish. The men are going further and staying out longer to fish, but their catches are declining. Women have to go outside the area (as far as Manchioneal in St. Thomas on the eastern side of the island) to purchase fish to sell.

Bee-keeping: The drought has caused a decline in flowering plants, reduced flowering and shorter flowering seasons. This has affected honey production. Apiarists have to buy sugar to feed their bees, and this reduces profits. Sometimes they have no honey to sell as they have to leave it for the bees. Nevertheless they think that there is a future in bee keeping, and they would encourage others to get into it.

Reasons for positive responses

The participants identified some positives that had resulted from climate change. These included grant funding and projects but they noted that these were insufficient to address the issues and they would rather have no projects and no negative climate change impacts. They also noted that there had been some increase in community unity, with people helping each other e.g. to rebuild houses. They felt that individuals found strengths they did not know they had when they had to deal with adversity.

Suggestions for actions that could improve the situation

Education and awareness: Suggestions included more education about the impacts of climate change. In their evaluations several participants indicated how much they appreciated the presentations about climate change, its causes and impacts. This indicates that there is a great need in the communities for more activities to increase awareness of this topic. The participants stressed the need to focus on children (as they will educate their parents) and to stress why it is bad to clear forests (especially mangroves) and burn garbage. In the past C-CAM provided disaster response manuals for communities in the Portland Bight Protected Area (PBPA). They said they found them useful so it would be good to update and reprint them.

Shelter management: Shelters need better security. They should provide separate areas for separation of males, females and families.

Planning: No build zones should be clearly defined and enforced by Municipal Corporations in order to stop people building in risky areas.

Enforcement: They would like to see stronger enforcement of environmental laws. This could mean more Honorary Game Wardens and community monitors. However they noted that provision of stipends to voluntary enforcement officers was desirable, at least to allow them to cover their costs. They also asked for more Conservation Officers to allow C-CAM to lead education and enforcement in the communities.

Informer culture: There is a need to get people to support community leaders and not fight against them or denigrate them as informers.

Supporting activities: Suggestions included the need for better garbage collection (so that community members would not feel the need to burn their garbage) and promotion of composting of organic waste. There was discussion of the potential for rainwater harvesting, which they noted had become more difficult because of declining rainfall and more frequent and severe droughts. They wanted to explore the possibility of community tanks with larger catchments. There should be a legal requirement that new houses should include water tanks. Support for business development and community livelihoods related to farming (livestock and cash crops) including training (such as customer service training, and beekeeping training) and provision of materials (such as top soil, seeds or fencing material) would be welcome.

These responses were very similar to those reported from VRA exercises in 2009 and 2011 (Haynes-Sutton 2000, 2011).

Question 2: How is COVID-19 affecting women in Portland Bight? What factors are making it difficult for women to respond? What can be done?

Mean score: Very bad 1.25

Table 2: Scores for vulnerability to COVID-19

Score	Category	# Responses	Weighted response	Average
Very bad	1	9	9	
Bad	2	3	6	
Moderate	3			
Good	4			
Very good	5			
TOTAL		12	15	1.25

Reasons for negative responses:

The participants considered that the impacts of COVID on their lives and their communities. They found that the impacts have been very bad (Table 2). Major problems included loss of sales (especially at Christmas) for businesses, impacts of curfews on restaurants and bars, increases in the cost and availability of inputs for farming and sewing (such as fabric to make curtains, sheets & clothes), increased costs of utilities and issues with home schooling. People had lost their jobs or had their hours cut. This makes it difficult for them to cover their expenses, such as food, mortgage and rent.

Issues for on-line schooling include parents not being able to afford suitable computers or tablets, small children having difficulties with the format, women having to spend a lot of time tutoring and supporting their children’s learning in addition to their usual jobs and tasks at home (and outside the home), some women do not have sufficient education to provide support for their children so they can find this very stressful, children without parents at home can be unsupervised, there can be additional expenses for tutors and food which can be expensive. Children are missing out on socialization. Other problems include domestic problems including alcohol abuse, increased verbal abuse of children, and inability of some families to provide sufficient food for children, which contributes to stress. This has been made worse by declines in remittances due to problems with families abroad.

Another issue is denial of the risks of COVID, which means that people are not following guidelines such as social distancing, reduced numbers in gatherings, wearing of masks, and respecting curfews. This is a particular problem at churches. There is a general unwillingness among community members to be vaccinated because of fears about side effects and possible death.

Reasons for positive responses:

The onset of COVID 19 has had some positive effects. People have been brought together and are cooperating with each other better. Parents find that the cost of devices and Internet can be less than the cost of sending children to school or paying rent and other expenses for students at university. Some people like working from home because of reduced costs and increased family time. Neighbours come together to share Internet connections and to help with tutoring and educating children. People have found that this encouraged people to develop entrepreneurial skills. Women are more likely than men to develop new businesses.

How could this score be improved?

Types of support that could help include small start-up grants and training for females who want to develop businesses. There is an existing Government of Jamaica backyard gardening programme, which we could find out more about. Online networks were suggested to improve information sharing. The participants would like to get rid of COVID19 but they are reluctant to be vaccinated. There were no suggestions about how this could be addressed. As long as COVID 19 is around there will be the need to continue to promote compliance with government regulations and recommendations about COVID 19. The group would like to see stronger penalties for infractions. They would like information about whether there are any natural cures or natural ways to build your body to fight the disease.

Other recommendations to improve livelihoods apply equally to COVID 19 and climate change adaptation. They include:

- Grants and training to improve livelihoods and small business development (e.g. farming, livestock, greenhouses, apiculture, business management, marketing.)
- Restoration of the fishing industry through establishing more fish sanctuaries (special fishery conservation areas) and increasing coral reef restoration.

CONCLUSIONS

The workshop showed the resilience and optimism of female community members who have faced major disruption to their lives and livelihoods over the last 15 years. Comparison with VRAs carried out between 2009 and 2011 (Haynes-Sutton 2009; 2011) showed that little has changed in their assessments of risks and possible solutions, except the additional stresses caused by COVID 19. The participants agreed that the impacts of climate change and COVID 19 affect women disproportionately. They also agreed that there were a few positive impacts, including increased community cooperation and incentives to start new businesses. There was agreement that there is a need for more training, support for business development, enforcement of environmental laws, and a large effort to support education and awareness.

The participants found the workshop useful and would like to see further workshops to develop the themes and include more people (Appendix 4).

LITERATURE CITED

Crane Droesch, A., N /Gaseb, P. Kurukulasuriya, A. Mershon, K. Mai Moussa, D. Rankine, A. Santos. 2008. A guide to Vulnerability Reduction Assessment. UNDP Working Paper.

Haynes-Sutton, A. 2009. Increasing community adaptation and ecosystem resilience to climate change in Portland Bight – Phase 1: Project Planning. Report on Stakeholders' Workshop. Report prepared for United Nations Development Programme.

Haynes-Sutton, A. 2011. Increasing community adaptation and ecosystem resilience to climate change in Portland Bight. Report on third Vulnerability Reduction Workshop. Report prepared for United Nations Development Programme project *"Increasing community adaptation and ecosystem resilience to climate change in Portland Bight."*

AGENDA

Title of the Workshop: Impact of COVID 19 and Climate Change on Vulnerable Women in Central Portland Bight, Jamaica

When: 10:30 am January 26th, 2021

Where: Hybrid - Online via Zoom and face-to-face at C-CAM's Lionel Town office

1. Registration and Refreshments – C-CAM
2. Introductions & Welcome – Ingrid Parchment, C-CAM
3. Overview – Ingrid Parchment, C-CAM
4. Presentations –
 - Climate Change Division, Ministry of Economic Growth & Job Creation
 - Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment & Sports
 - Ministry of Health & Wellness
5. Vulnerability Reduction Assessment – Ann Sutton, consultant
6. Closing Remarks – Ingrid Parchment.

Climate change affects people in many ways. Women and children are especially vulnerable.



State of mind
 People do not function well when it is hot. Adults cannot work. Children cannot learn. Violent behaviour increases. Old people are more vulnerable. The burden of care falls mainly on women.



Health
 Mosquito and water borne diseases increase. Chikungunya and Zika cost the Jamaican economy more than J\$30 million in 2014. Portland Bight residents were badly affected. Women have to care for the sick.



Jobs
 Hurricane Ivan did millions of dollars of damage to the port at Rocky Point and put it out of service for months. Disruption of industry can cause loss of jobs and income. Women have to find ways to bridge the gaps.

Housing and communities
 More than half the houses in Portland Cottage were badly damaged by hurricanes Ivan or Dean



Opportunities for recreation
 Recreational beaches including Jackson Bay and Welcome Beach have been badly damaged. Women's quality of life decline.



Crabbers
 Crabbing season is less predictable and its length is reduced from 3 weeks to 3 days.