

MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION##

Save the Children International (SCI) in Rwanda has honed a vision about integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into their programmes for some time. As Rwanda is a country vulnerable to an array of natural disaster risks, the organization found it imperative to address this issue. When lightning struck a school in Kisoro district on the 25th of September this year, killing four people, of whom one was a six year old boy, the urgency to take action became even more apparent. SCI Rwanda decided to empower children in Rwanda to join in the efforts to mediate the negative effects of climate change. However, the challenge for a small country office like Rwanda's, was a shortage of resources to create a whole new programme area. Therefore, some innovation was needed in order to mainstream DRR at a minimal cost. This report recounts this exciting process.

ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN



Children in Primary 5 at a school in Burera district, making a map of their environment, showing potential risk areas.

Children's involvement in the mainstreaming process was the top priority from the beginning. Therefore, an SC intern was given the assignment of going out to the different districts in Rwanda where SC works, to collect the views of children on what natural disaster risks they face in their daily lives. Using an intern for this task was a cost effective choice, since none of the employed staff needed to devote any extra time on it. The intern accompanied the staff on their scheduled field visits, so as not to incur any extra costs for transport, and asked children as well as adults, to take 30 minutes of their time to reflect on DRR, and to give their opinions on the subject.

After a total of four focus group discussions in three different districts, with about 65 people: children, parents, pre-school teachers, primary-school teachers and SC staff, the results were compiled. It turned out that many of the issues were cross-cutting. People were worried about mainly four risks: heavy rain-storms, wind-storms, lightning-storms and mudslides. During the

discussions, people were asked to give suggestions on how to mitigate these dangers, and it became clear which messages about DRR that were important to spread within their communities.

PLAYING AND LEARNING

Now the fun began! To make these messages about DRR easily accessible to SC beneficiaries, without requesting programme teams to take up time and resources from other planned activities, SCI Rwanda decided to turn the messages into songs and short energizers, to routinely be used with beneficiaries in the “breaks” from trainings and on-going activities in the different SCI programme areas. Through a “play session” for a small number of interns and SC staff, these songs and energizers were translated into the local language, and adapted for different age groups. Now, by for example singing the “Lightning Song,” to the melody of “Frère Jacques,” children benefiting from SCI Rwanda programmes can learn not to take cover under a tall tree when there is a lightning storm, and have fun in the process!



LIGHTNING SONG TO THE MELODY OF “FRÈRE JACQUES”

Iyo inkuba zikubita

[When there’s a lightning storm]

Iyo inkuba zikubita

[When there’s a lightning storm]

Jya mu nzu

[Take cover in a house]

Jya mu nzu

[Take cover in a house]

Ntujye muni y’igiti

[Not under a tall tree]

Ntujye muni y’igiti

[Not under a tall tree]

Inkuba yahagukubitira

[(Where) the lightning might strike]

Ka-zing, Ka-zing, Ka-zam!

[Ka-zing, Ka-zing, Ka-zam!]