



Bangar El-Sokkar and Moving Stagnant Water - Climate Change in the Region

Action at the Frontline Western Alexandria, Egypt

SUMMARY:

Policy makers in both rich and poor countries around the world estimate that up until 2012 32.4 million people were displaced from 82 countries after being exposed to sudden natural disasters. We find that the displacement results from the cumulative effects of disasters on the affected people. When these displaced people return to their homes that have been affected by the disaster, this is treating the symptoms without addressing the underlying problem.

In this context, we have chosen Bangar El-Sokkar as one of the hot spots in Egypt which is suffering from drought caused by climate change. This process was performed in collaboration with: the Ministry of Defense - Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources - Ministry of local Development - Ministry of Health - Ministry of Agriculture - Ministry of Environment - Crisis and Disaster Center and Decision Support.

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INTRODUCTION:

The area of Bangar El-Sokkar is an irrigated area at the end of “El-Nasr Canal”. The studied area is located to the west of Maryut area. The area consists of thirty nine separate villages spread over three governorates (Beheira, Alexandria and Matrouh). Bangar El-Sokkar is a newly reclaimed area in Egypt, where the government started to localize new graduates since 1987 till 1992.

The AFL team analyzed the social, economic and environmental impacts that occurred in the community due to climate change. The chosen area of Bangar El-Sokkar is prone to such natural phenomenon. This area is representative of most areas in Egypt, which may be exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, the growing dangers of climate phenomenon, drought and human dangers. Such as; declining land and agricultural productivity in some areas feedback to environmental stresses and growing pressures to meet the economic and social needs of members of the community.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES:

Challenges faced by the community:

- Lack of irrigation water amounts, especially in summer.
- Irregular irrigation shifts especially in summer
- Lack of access to water and to the ends of the branches of canals and especially the end of the Branch No. 15
- Irregular purges of some channels

The accumulation of agricultural and household waste on the sides of the branches of canals and drains near residential areas.

The key actors are different in this case study, as most actors are affected by this phenomenon are the farmers living in this area, as have invested the last 10 years in agriculture and to become the first financial source for most of the families living in Bangar El-Sokkar.

We found that the economic problems and the bad state of environment are leading members of the community to migrate from their homes.

The teamwork formed “the national committee” for discussing and sharing problems the committee gathered all the concerned parties from the Ministries of Agriculture, environment, irrigation and water resources and also media, CSO’s, and NGOs.

Through the meetings we gathered all the concerned parties in one circle to discuss all threats, and to reach suitable solutions for their current conditions.

A meeting was held with the local community with representatives of youth and women, NGOs, as well as houses of worship, and executives.

Initially community resilience did not exist, which can lead to a low level or degree of adaptation and adaptability. Due to the degradation of natural resources, as well as, drought, the availability of water resources worsens the agricultural situation, and accelerates land degradation. This leads to reduce the productivity of the land, and the loss of crops. Throughout meetings the community started to understand the problem and to start working against it.

Many problems and issues were monitored through the meetings, all related to the environment and its impacts on the vulnerable communities. Prior to the establishment of the committee there was no way for the marginalised voices to be heard but through the meetings the opportunity came to them to meet with the ministries representatives to discuss the issues freely and openly.

We needed the support from the community in understanding the situation, knowing that the community in Bangar El-Sokkar were not aware about climate change issues and its impacts.

Initial questions to the community were devoted to investigate migration significance. Information was also collected on major communities' challenges, communities' awareness of climate change and its impact, residents' plans for climate change adaptation, and communities' expectations for climate change adaptation.

At the first public meeting with the community the Minister of Agriculture was invited. The problems and suggestions were presented and this represented a major move into the main objectives of the process.

Focus groups discussions on socio-economic issues were held mainly at local administration, schools, NGOs and city centres, etc.

One of the most important workshops implemented during this phase was the Media workshop. Besides Media representatives, the workshop also targeted NGOs, Youth, and Research Institutes. The objective of the workshop was to present the progress made on the study and its major findings. Participants were also involved in proposing policies and procedures to mitigate climate change. Community members also identified preparedness and resilience arrangements to deal with the climate change effects. Capacity building requirements to improve governmental agencies and agreed future steps were also identified.

We can say that we have achieved a large success in this part as we gained the trust of the community, we were able to provide them with the support within meetings and the cooperation occurred with many stakeholders in the community.

During the planning stage of the assessment, a decision was taken to design different questionnaires to capture the differences that exists between households and administration officials. Unlike the urban and rural areas, where households were taken as the focus of the survey, the assessment of the agricultural sector was focused on the personal roles played by selected interviewees in the production of agriculture resources. Questions regarding access to essential services (health, education, power supplies and water) were framed differently when interviewing householders and officials.

The AFL team arranged focus group discussions and workshops for special groups. The purpose of these events is to combine the classical survey methodologies used with a participatory action approaches. The coordinator enlisted lead policy questions as a tool to stimulate interactive dialogue between different stakeholders.

Workshops targeted farmers and area major stakeholders, mainly representatives from Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Ministry of Local Administration, Governorates of Alexandria, and Behira, EEAA. The major outcomes of the workshop were the identification of major problems facing the study area. Most participants voiced problems related to shortage of irrigation water through El Nassr Channel, shortage of nitrogen fertilizers provided by agriculture cooperatives, land distributions and ownership

as well as, deterioration of roads, health care services, education and agriculture products storage and marketing. Shortage of modern agriculture machinery was also raised.

We are facing a particular problem in the target area as there is an existing administrative problem in the subordination where this region is located between the provinces of Alexandria and Matrouh and administratively they trace the none of the two provinces, that causes, failure to monitor the budgets for this region and the deterioration in infrastructure and services in the region.

RISK PROFILE:

Groups in the community	Priority risk and why?
Men	Increasing the economic burdens
Women	Increasing the economic burdens individually and on the family
Youth	Increasing the unemployment and the unsafe jobs
Elderly	Threatened of migration
Landless	Threatened of migration
Farmers or fisher folks	Losing their jobs and migration
Village authorities	-----

LESSONS LEARNT:

- The marginalised group has to be involved in the decision making process and operation.
- Levels of the area climate change awareness are still low amongst surveyed communities. This does not imply that the effects are not felt: the impacts are evident, but the link between lifestyle and climate change needs to be better interpreted to enable effective adoption of related approaches to adapt to the effects. There is need to conduct large survey to generate information. Proposed survey will form the basis to establish a foundation for decision makers for climate change mitigation activities. It is also recommended that awareness campaigns/programs regarding climate change and measures to combat to be introduced for better awareness.
- The scientific community should have a central and critical role in providing specialized scientific and technical input to assist governments and communities in drought risk reduction.
- To cope with projected climate changes, farmers plans to adapt by, change their crop rotation to make the best use of available water; adjust sowing dates according to temperature, availability of water and rainfall patterns; use crop varieties better suited to new weather conditions; change their life style for more water conservation and increase their knowledge about climate change, impacts and its best mitigation.

CONCLUSIONS:

The target community in Bangar El-Sokkar did not stand idly by but taken many measures to agree and mitigate the effects of climate change by several measures the most important

change the types of crops and sequencing to make the most of the available amount of water, changing planting dates, according to air temperature, and water availability and patterns of rainfall, and the use of new crop varieties most suitable climatic conditions, and the types more compatible with the heat and drought, with a lifestyle change for the style standard of living consistent with the lack of available water in addition to working to increase the knowledge and information on climate change and its effects, and the most appropriate ways to manage it.

The teamwork has agreed that the next period must include four important meetings of the with the Minister of “Local Development” to discuss the administrative subordination of the villages of Bangar El-Sokkar, at the second meeting with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture held various agricultural challenges facing the population in this region of the production, marketing, storage, drying and processing.

Participants also agreed to hold a meeting with the Minister of Irrigation to discuss everything related to irrigation systems in the area and intense need to cover three kilometres from the canal victory.

The fourth meeting it was decided to be held with various stakeholders finance and insurance systems and government support for the community problems.