

K4D Impact Stories #3

K4D bolstering international recognition of flooding challenges in Nigeria

The issue of flooding in Nigerian cities is relatively poorly documented, despite the significant economic damage and the loss of life it results in each year. The lack of a consistent set of data for informing policy and programming is a well-recognised challenge. Recognising the value of access to a reliable evidence base, colleagues at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Nigeria office collaborated with the K4D team in drafting a desk review that outlined a deeper understanding of the impact, risk factors and associated management and mitigation factors to urban flooding in Nigeria. Evidence indicates that the report has proved a successful instrument in both providing a foundation for evidence-based action, as well as serving as a tool in which to engage and inspire a wide range of stakeholders.

The opportunity

In Lagos, the total economic losses due to flooding across the state have been estimated at USD \$4 billion per year, 4.1% of the state's GDP or 1.0% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In Ibadan, average annual losses due to flooding have been estimated at USD \$105.3 million per year. Floods in Ibadan are estimated to have killed 129 people and destroyed 3,102 homes between the years 2000 and 2015.

Despite the fact that flooding is a well-recognised problem affecting many cities every year across Nigeria, the impacts of flooding have been poorly documented. There is no consistent set of statistics at the national or sub-national level that can be used to compare impact across cities, and reporting on individual flood events are often incomplete and of poor quality. Most of the available data is not disaggregated by gender, despite the fact that evidence indicates women and girls worldwide are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of natural hazards.

K4D contribution

Recognising the issue of flooding as a key development challenge, one FCDO team member in a blog voiced his appreciation of the value of having access to data as a means to efficiently and effectively tackle this problem:

"We knew that there was an issue, a development challenge to be tackled. We knew that we wanted help to tackle this issue, we also knew that we needed more information to ensure that any potential future investments in this area were evidence-based and best value-for-money."

In light of a lack of internal resources to meet this need, the K4D team was contacted. Drawing on a previously commissioned African-wide K4D report on urban flood management approaches, a Nigerian in-country FCDO advisor collaborated with the K4D team to draft a more in-depth, country-specific literature review examining Nigeria's city-level flood risk challenges. Working together they were able to narrow down key report objectives, research questions and a scope of analysis that focused on a deep examination of impact, risk factors and associated management and mitigation measures. The commissioning FCDO team member expressed strong appreciation for both the process of collaboration and the end product,

"I think it's a strong resource; the responsiveness of the team I really liked. The fact that really capable researchers are used to do this work – I cannot emphasise enough that the researcher who wrote this piece really knew his audience."

Impact

Informing evidence-based action

K4D survey data alongside key informants on the ground indicate the Helpdesk Report on Urban Flood Management in Nigeria served as an instrumental tool that was able to support a more complex understanding of an under-informed issue. Specifically, the report was cited for its value in feeding into a high-level analysis of the issue, which exposed further areas for exploration. Noting the importance of the use of evidence to trigger action, the FCDO team member who commissioned the report outlined how the Helpdesk Report served as a key foundation from which to build future evidence-based action.

“At the start, we knew we had to do something about the flooding in Nigeria, but we didn’t understand the scale and complexity of the challenge – so we used K4D to probe for that, the nature of the challenge. From the report we could then use that to dig deeper to understand the cost benefits of various approaches.”

Highlights from the report on approaches to tackle urban flooding have informed a high-level cost-benefit appraisal of potential sets of interventions. Significantly, this analysis has played a key role in informing partner engagement and bolstering wider investment. One specific area under exploration has been the use of financial sector solutions. Initiated through a set of brown bag discussions centred on the report, the team has been able to secure an investment from [FSD Africa](#) for circa £1 million pounds with the aim of exploring financial sector solutions to tackle urban flood risks. Further investment has been secured through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Lagos state government focused on the state design of a flood risk financial resilience strategy.

Increasing levels of awareness

Beyond uncovering essential insights on the impacts of flooding, a key report objective was its use as a tool in which to engage both internal and external stakeholders on the issue of flooding in Nigeria. In meeting this challenge, there is strong evidence to indicate the report has been successfully utilised to both pique interest and inspire action. Internally, the report has been used to inform dialogues and brown bag sessions across FCDO Nigeria. Reporting indicates these conversations have played a key role in shaping thinking at in-country on climate and resilience efforts and have provided a pathway for colleagues to integrate flood risk considerations into ongoing programming.

Externally, the report has provided significant support in raising the profile of the scale and complexity of Nigeria’s urban flood risk challenges. It has been shared widely, including with government partners, across sectors beyond Nigeria in West Africa and most notably through media outlets where it was [cited by CNN and at least 15 other international news platforms](#). The topic was given further attention through knowledge exchange sessions convened to discuss issues that surfaced in the report with development stakeholders across Nigeria (UNDP, World Bank, C40) with over 70 people in attendance.

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CREDITS

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Knowledge, evidence and learning for development

FURTHER READING

> [Urban Flood Risks, Impacts, and Management in Nigeria](#)

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