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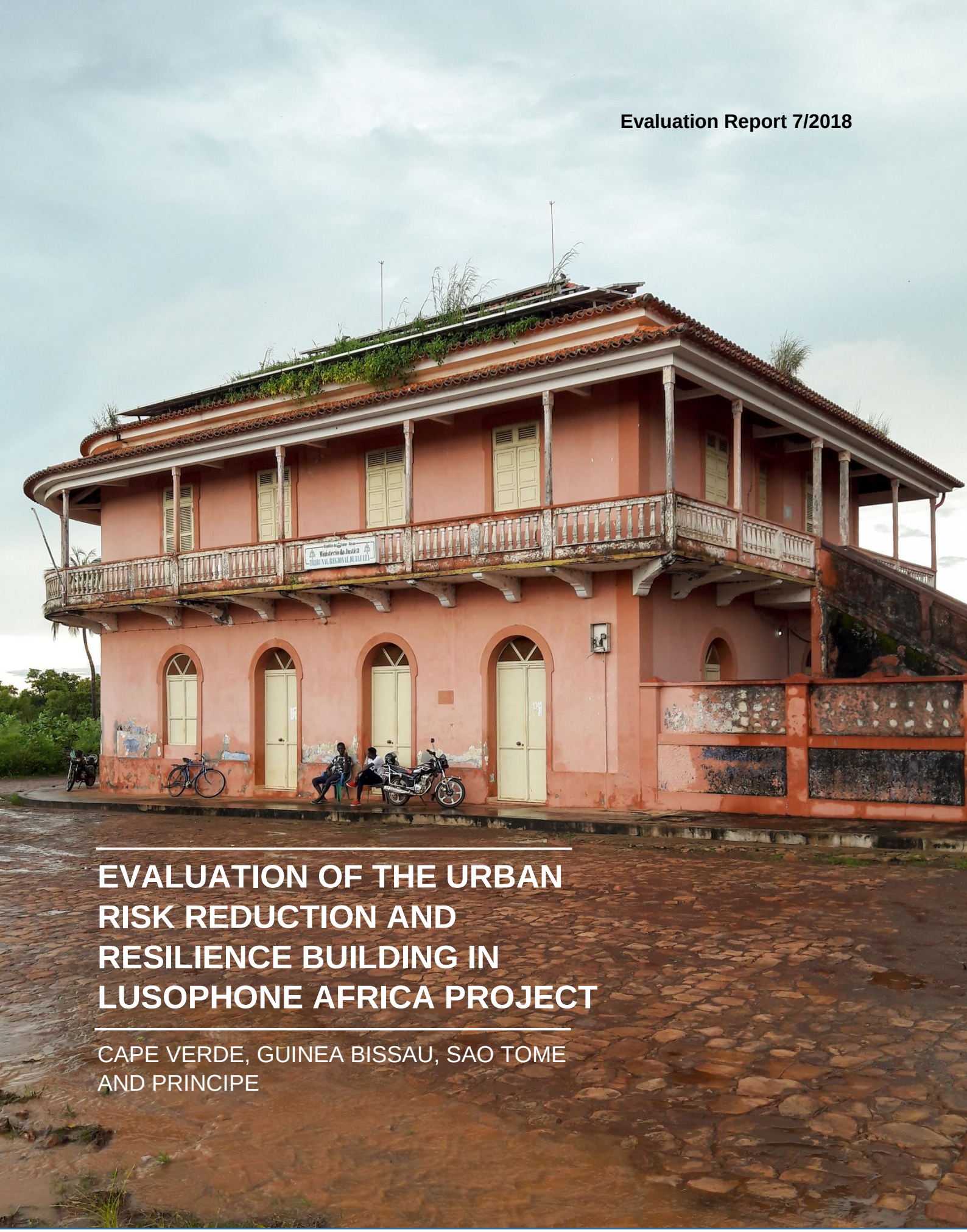

EVALUATION OF THE URBAN RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING IN LUSOPHONE AFRICA PROJECT

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UN-HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNISDR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Evaluation of the Urban Risk Reduction and Resilience Building in Lusophone Africa Project

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CONPREC	National Council for Preparation and Responses to Disasters
CV	Cape Verde
FP	Focal Points
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GB	Guinea Bissau
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NTA	National Technical Advisor
RFA	Resilience Framework for Action
ROAf	Regional Office for Africa
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
STP	Sao Tomé and Principe
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
URRR	Urban Risks Reduction and Resilience

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UN-Habitat has been involved in urban risk reduction and rehabilitation for over three decades and together with UNISDR it has developed user-friendly tools targeting municipal officials for urban risk reduction and resilience.

The project on Urban Risk Reduction and Resilience Building in Lusophone Africa is a joint project of UN-Habitat, UNISDR and UNECA. It falls into the Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation sub-programme of UN-Habitat, as part of its 2014-2015 approved programme of work aiming to increase the resilience of cities to the impacts of natural and human-made crises.

The project's objective was to increase the capacities of municipalities of Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tomé and Principe for reducing urban risk and building resilience. To achieve this objective, the project intended to firstly increase the levels of technical understanding and knowledge of municipal authorities, leading to an improved capacity to integrate risk reduction and resilience into urban plans and municipal strategies. Secondly, by enhancing the communication and information exchange between cities and towns in each country and across the three countries, the project intended to enhance their risk reduction and resilience practices.

The projects specific objectives were therefore to (1) Enhance capacity of municipal authorities in select countries to integrate risk reduction and resilience concepts into urban plans and municipal strategies and (2) Enhanced communication and information exchange between cities and towns in each country and across the 3 countries.

The project was implemented between January 2015 and December 2017 and had a budget of US$559,000. The lead entity of the project was the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Africa.

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the performance of the project. Its objectives were to provide UNDA partners and UN-Habitat with an independent and forward-looking appraisal of the project's operational experience, achievements, opportunities and challenges based on its performance and expected accomplishments. Evaluation findings are expected to inform UNDA partners, UN-Habitat and other key stakeholders, including governing bodies and Member States on what was achieved and learned from the project.

The evaluation was conducted from 8 August 2018 to 5 October 2018, by the external consultant, Mr. Simon Deprez, with a field visit undertaken in Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Sao Tomé and Principe from 3 to 23 September 2018.

The assessments and rating of performance made by the evaluation follows UN-Habitat criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact outlook and sustainability.

Main findings

The project final evaluation has shown a good achievement of the main project outputs, namely CityRAP workshops and RFA. This results in an achievement of the intermediate objective of increasing the technical understanding and knowledge of the municipal staff. Although several limitations to the transmission of these enhanced capacities to the municipal authorities' level, the first expected achievement (EA.1) « Increased levels of technical understanding and knowledge of municipal authorities » can be deemed as achieved.

The evaluation also shows that national and the sub-regional seminars have been privileged moments for exchange between local stakeholders, however exchanges on URRR did not continue outside of these events. Achievement of the second expected achievement (EA.2) "Enhanced communication and information exchange between cities and towns » has thus only been partially achieved.

The overall relevance of the project is highly satisfactory as the theme covered, namely urban risks and resilience, as well as the approach developed, are closely aligned with both international frameworks and the strategies and objectives of UN-Habitat and its partners. It also highly complements the other urban resilience tools developed by UN-Habitat.

The approach developed was aligned to the local-level needs and, more specifically, with the causes behind the lack of urban risk reduction and resilience. The countries selected are also highly relevant as all three are affected by the

same combination of factors, including high exposure to natural risks and the impacts of climate change, high levels of socio-economic vulnerability, and high urbanisation.

Activity implementation was particularly cost efficient, helped by a number of factors inherent in the CityRAP tool. However, the initial budget had to be significantly revised to more adequately allocate resources, which potentially affected the delivery of certain activities and, in one city, prevented implementation of the tool.

At the local level, the CityRAP tool was implemented in three different ways, each of which was effectively adapted to their specific contexts. This notably resulted in municipal staff being closely involved in implementing the tool, which led to unforeseen positive impact on local governance. Project implementation was, however, affected by the fact that activities fell behind schedule due to several global and local constraints.

The project enabled the focal points, and particularly the municipal staff, to acquire sound technical knowledge and skills, even though the levels achieved vary quite significantly. However, applying this knowledge and skills has proved more difficult, notably due to a lack of opportunities and roles in decision-making processes. The project's premise of transferring the skills acquired by the focal points to improve the municipalities' capacities has not been fully proven meaning that the project's impacts are only partially achieved.

The sustainability of the impacts is being hampered by the low levels of political will, coupled with the lack of financial resources, to implement urban resilience strategies. However, ongoing interest in the tool at the different levels (national authorities and partner agencies) means that, in some places, the project is continuing, both through replication of the tool in other cities and by including urban risks and the resilience approach into other large-scale programmes.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the CityRAP tool's implementation in the three countries, as well as the relevance of its methodology, has been confirmed by the project's results and impacts. Its unique urban resilience approach, an almost entirely participatory process, partly succeeded to spur a shift in local practices and approaches to achieve urban resilience objectives. However, project follow-up would be required to foster long term impacts and to ensure further results.

The tool implemented, CityRAP, is innovative in its approach, methodology and scale of implementation, but its success remains highly dependent on national and local stakeholders' appetite for supporting and investing in the process. Local initiatives for continuing the project could feed reflections on the future use of the tool, to serve more tangible objectives as a stand-alone approach, or to influence broader initiatives.

Recommendations:

R.1: To carry out needs and capacity assessment prior to delivering training and better define the tool's target groups in order to develop tailored specific objectives that are based on their urban risk management and urban governance roles.

R.2: Include more people with decision-making authority from local and national authorities and institutions in the training to raise awareness of urban risks and foster ownership of the tool.

R.3: In view of the project results, update a generic and informed theory of change of the CityRAP tool, in order to better define the understanding of its impacts and to better ensure the achievement of its main goal, to foster the adoption of resilience strategies. This shall include to and intermediate levels for achieving urban resilience.

R.4: Promote more in-depth analysis of the underlying causes of vulnerability to foster the identification of innovative approaches that break with traditional risk mitigation practices.

R.5: Better define the objectives, format and titles of the action plans based on local resources and objectives in order to make them more realistic, better understood and improve ownership.

R.6: Adapt the scale of the target areas in line with existing risks (origin of the threat, aggravating factors, etc.); this may include conducting an assessment of surrounding rural areas.

R.7: In the RFAs, take the lack of resources into account by highlighting the important and low-cost interventions, and support the focal points to identify alternative implementation methods (governance, services, …) for more flexible, more holistic and more cost-effective approaches.

R.8: Systematically introduce a support phase into the tool's implementation process by using local resources or external funds. In addition, ensure that communication with all local stakeholders (including communities) on the implementation of the RFA is regular, clear and manages expectations.

R.9: In the RFAs, more clearly identify existing data and the studies still required to support the definition and future development of the identified priority interventions and areas.

R.10: At training sessions and meetings, share case studies of resilient cities or neighbourhoods that have used a range of different approaches to operationalise their action plans.

R.11: Use existing networks (like DiMSUR) and social networks to encourage auto-learning and direct communication between local stakeholders.

R.12: Improve synergies with local dynamic projects or themes, taking care not to jeopardise any of the strengths of the approach (dynamism, autonomy, or ownership).

Lessons learned:

L.1: The tool is recognised as being easy to work with, but relatively complex overall as, while the focal points have been able to complete different stages and exercises, not all of them have a complete overview. Guidance and support from the trainers remain indispensable for this.

L.2: The collaborative work conducted by the local stakeholders has helped demonstrate local teams' management capacities to the national governments. In so doing, it has endorsed decentralisation goals and objectives to devolve decision-making authority. In addition to improving municipal staff's capacities, the project helped promote their efforts and gave them confidence in their roles and capacities.

L.3: The short implementation period for the tool is both an advantage and a limitation; it creates a dynamic process and involves stakeholders for only a limited time, but does not provide enough time to cover the resilience concept and proposed interventions in any great detail.

L.4: The workshops were "a breath of fresh air" for the municipal staff as they were able to learn about and test new approaches and methodologies; however, this can be followed by frustration as the process does not always result in tangible changes. The frustration of neighbourhood residents' is also a risk if expectations raised by the participatory process are not managed by a clear communication on the objectives of the process and by supporting RFA implementation.

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