

Case Study: Minions of Disruptions - Kenya Edition

October 2022



Gamified research session with a Women's Village Savings and Lending Group in Kajiado.

Background

Climate change is already having notable detrimental effects in Kenya. From widespread drought, to floods, to famine, communities are forced to adapt to the rapidly changing weather patterns. Not everyone is affected evenly, however, as women, children, elderly, financially insecure, and rural populations disproportionately experience the adverse impacts of climate change. Though the situation may be bleak, it is not hopeless.

After the success of Day of Adaptation (DAYAD)'s climate adaptation board game, Minions of Disruptions, in Europe and abroad, there remained the question of whether this game could be adapted for a vastly different context. DAYAD partnered with Simavi, Proportion Global, Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (KEWASNET), Center for Social Planning and Administrative Development (CESPAD), and Neighbours Initiative Alliance (NIA) to co-create a new version of the game for use in Kajiado County, Kenya.

"We [...] need this kind of awareness to our people to adapt to impacts of climate change"

-- a community member participant

Goal

The main goal of this project was to prove the acceptability of the climate game as an advocacy tool for both local Kenyan organizations working in the field and the communities with whom they work. This goal was co-developed by the project partners with a long-term vision that the game would provide a space for complex, relevant, and positive conversations surrounding the climate crisis. The conversations initiated during the game could ultimately foster localized, bottom-up climate adaptation action to benefit the whole community.



An interactive research session with primary school students in Kajiado Central.

Process

Our partners at Proportion Global led the team through an accelerated version of Human-Centered Design. There were four different stages, or “sprints”: Scoping, Research, Design, and Iteration. The process begins with listening to understand the desires, abilities, and constraints of the target audience and then embarks on an iterative journey to co-create a solution that attains the project goals.

All project partners took part in each of the four sprints. With team members spanning four different countries, meetings took place on Zoom and remote members traveled to Kajiado County as necessary for research and prototype testing.

Scoping

Focused on getting to know the team, stakeholder mapping, formulating a problem hypothesis, and the co-creation of a design brief outlining our shared understanding of the project.

Research

Comprised desk and field research components to understand the project context, and data synthesis which was used to revise the original design brief.

Design

Involved sketching solutions individually and then as a team, building a prototype based on these sketches, testing with community groups, and reflection.

Iteration

Included prioritizing feedback from the first prototype, revisions, prototype testing, and reflection.

Results

The prototype of the adapted game yielded positive results. Participants readily made the connection between the game and their lives, expressed having learned about climate change and climate adaptation, and reported feeling motivated by the actions taken by other players in the game. Participants additionally reflected upon how playing the game could be expanded to include more members of society, specifically women and youth.

"Our women play an important role in the economy, they should be part of this game since they make a lot of decisions"

-- young man

Practitioners also responded positively to the game as a new addition to their advocacy toolkits. They envision Minions of Disruptions accompanying their workshops about climate change, integrated into participatory empowerment programs, and as a tool for activating discussions in the community, among others.

Notable challenges were overcome during the design process. These included adapting the game to low/no literacy groups, accounting for power imbalances among the participants, translating the game into local languages such as Maasai, and ensuring the illustrations used resonated with communities.

Conclusion

This project successfully adapted Minions of Disruptions through an engaging co-creation process, and proved the acceptability of the innovative solution as an advocacy tool for use in rural Kenya. Beyond the localized scope of this project, it also supports the possibility of future projects adapting Minions of Disruptions to other distinct contexts.

Though evaluating the long-term implications of this game in Kajiado is outside the scope of this initial project, immediate feedback supports that the game provided an environment for different community members to come together to discuss climate change in their lives, as well as potential adaptation strategies relevant to their local context.

Finally, on a broader scale, this project supports the usage of co-created, bottom-up climate adaptation empowerment initiatives for both organizations and communities. It shows that localized meaningful impacts are possible when the community is centered in the design process.