

Evaluation report of the
Disaster Risk Management Project

**Enhancement of community
based and institutional disaster
risk management capacity in the
Chinde District,
Lower Zambezi Valley,
Mozambique**

implemented by
Deutsche Welthungerhilfe
and financed by DIPECHO
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I. Summary

1 Brief description of the project and framework conditions

The disaster risk management (DRM) project in Chinde District in the upper delta valley of the Zambezi River is part of the 2nd Action Plan for South-East Africa and the South-West Indian Ocean Region of DIPECHO (DIPECHO II). The project components focus on capacity building for the local committees for disaster risk management (LCDRM) and the district technical council (DTC) training for teacher and students in disaster risk reduction (DRR), installation of an early warning system (EWS), preparation of community rescue and action plans, identification and rehabilitation of evacuation routes, mitigation works and prevention activities to support vulnerable communities.

The project started on the 1 July 2010 and ended 17 months later in November 2011, after a two-month no cost extension. It was implemented in collaboration with Concern, a member of the NGO Alliance 2015. With a total budget of €446,746 the evaluated project is the second (second phase) and successor to a DRM project under DIPECHO I. The current project is characterized by an extension and consolidation of the former project's achievements.

Welthungerhilfe has been working in Chinde District since 2001 supporting rural development and emergencies; Concern has been working in the district since 2005 in developing livelihoods, education and relief.

Chinde District is one of the districts most affected by disasters in Mozambique. The communities are very isolated and the area is characterized by high food insecurity, inadequate delivery of basic services and a high level of poverty. Roads are in very poor condition and the local economy is barely developed. The communities have to cope with major hazards and calamities including regular flooding as well as tropical storms, droughts, uncontrolled bush fires and the extinction of coconut palm trees – the only real source of income for the rural population and one of the major food sources during emergencies.

Basically, the rural people live in a typical subsistence set-up relying on agriculture and fishing, but in the Chinde area these are at a very low level. This means that most people do not have sufficient food throughout the year. Signs of malnutrition, especially among children, are everywhere. The educational level of the target group is very low.

The total number of beneficiaries as specified in the project application is 125,560.

2 Relevance

Disaster reduction is developing into a major topic for the project and programme work of the Welthungerhilfe as natural disasters increasingly call for humanitarian assistance. With its engagement, Welthungerhilfe wants to contribute to a rethinking of disaster preparedness – away from a short-term view, and towards more development and forward looking measures for policy and practice.

Mozambique is among the 15 most vulnerable countries and ranks second in terms of its susceptibility according to the environmental risk report of 2011. The country is still

substantially supported with general food distributions by the World Food Programme (WFP), although its agricultural potential is huge. The vulnerability of the target group is mainly based on a low level of education, high food insecurity and dependency on external interventions and a limited potential for self-help. The project is, therefore, very important not just for the district, but also for the region and the whole country.

It should be emphasised that from an outsider's perspective the project is highly relevant for the population in the Chinde District, as increased preparedness enhances the chances of survival in case of emergencies. But the people asked defined their own priorities, as related to their main day-to-day problems with regards to poverty and food security and did not mention DRR as being of particular relevance to them.

3 Effectiveness

The stakeholders' participation during the project preparation process apparently was not significant even though the project made efforts to promote their participation. This results from a widespread attitude of stakeholders at all levels in Mozambique. Obviously the beneficiaries depend on outside initiatives and are hardly prepared and able to contribute and develop their own ideas to solve problems.

Generally speaking the proposal and logical framework are well designed: the specific objective and the results are realistic and, in principle, achievable; they are formulated and represent a logical and important continuation of the first project.

In general the resilience of at-risk communities in Chinde District has been promoted by strengthening DRR capacities at community and institutional level. In 20 communities LCDRM have been trained in disaster risk management. The training focused on floods and cyclones, resulting in better preparedness at the community level with increased capacity for mitigation and response being established.

The project increased the number of participating communities from 15 to 20 communities, accompanied by an increase of beneficiaries. The direct implementation of interventions focused on 360 LCDRM coordinators, 20 delegates from public sector institutions and 60 teachers.

The communities earmarked risk zones and safer zones. Evacuation routes were identified and marked, and one bridge, which had been a bottleneck on an evacuation route, was rehabilitated.

Emergency kits were distributed to the LCDRMs. An EWS was established, based on high frequency radio technology, to improve the linkage and communication among the communities, and also with the district administration, the administration posts in Luabo and Micaune as well as with the provincial government. During simulation events the EWS was tested and worked well. Meanwhile some radios have small defects or need readjustments and are not available to the EWS at the moment.

Other project activities for preparedness and prevention were carried out, for example (a) because people usually drink unfiltered river water some bio-sand water filters were

distributed to schools and family groups. The filters improve water quality up to WHO standards and therefore reduce the risks of water borne diseases; (b) community fields were established and equipped with motor pumps for field irrigation close to evacuation sites to contribute to people's alimentation in the case of emergencies. In addition these fields were to be used to generate some income for the community to cover DRR costs for maintenance, compensation, etc. (This intervention did not render results, because communal field management was not well accepted among the target group); (c) in addition, an endangered river bank was planted with vetiver grass to reduce erosion and the loss of agricultural land. These were all designed as test activities.

The current project tried to increase the participation of the target group (compared to the former project). This was achieved through the creation of committees for community life (CCL). This forum has representatives from all social groups or institutions having an interest in the improvement of livelihood conditions within the community. The CCLs are used to discussing, in a participatory manner, community concerns and common problems (threats, vulnerabilities and risks) and to developing possible actions. The project gained a lot of credibility and acceptance and created good dynamics among the target group by involving the different community groups.

The average achievement for all four results is around 76%, which can be considered a good result, bearing in mind the difficult circumstances the project had to deal with. The weakness of the public sector in particular and the poor livelihood conditions of the target group in general, as well as some unsuitable project pilot activities regarding prevention measures, all contributed to hampered project performance.

4 Efficiency

The project was managed by an expert from Central America, skilled and experienced in DRR work and community sensitisation. She had already successfully managed and implemented the DIPECHO I project despite adverse circumstances.

All in all, the project was carried out very effectively and professionally and has developed its reputation and its effectiveness, thanks to the commitment, dedication and hard work of the implementing team with support from all the institutions involved. Lessons learnt from the first project were taken into account to improve project performance. In particular, the significant increase in the number of beneficiaries and communities enhanced project efficiency compared to the previous project.

The project gained support from the regional office in Harare with technical advice and project monitoring visits. Difficulties, particularly in the construction of the bridge, were finally resolved and the quality adequate. The internal monitoring and evaluation systems allowed the follow-up of the project's implementation and the introduction of corrective measures. The M&E was the responsibility of the project coordinator. The intended KAP study.

The cost/benefit ratio was acceptable for projects like this and the budget allocation corresponded to other DRR projects. Projects with a strong capacity building component have low investment per beneficiary, but high personnel and project running costs. Two

thirds of the budget was needed for project management costs and personnel costs. One third was used for “hardware” and capacity building.

The budget was generally appropriate, with few shortcomings, e.g. the rehabilitation of the bridge. Overspending was compensated through a balanced reduction in other budget items, without sacrificing the quality of other measures.

Analysis of the donor funding policy showed that a meaningful and professional quality management regarding the implementation of NGO performance and project outcomes was missing, which definitely negatively affected the project efficiency. A more strategic approach should be sought, not only to justify the investments and expenses, but also to promote a positive impact and sustainability.

5 Outcomes and impacts

The most relevant outcomes and effects observed are:

- The communities, and in particular the members of the LCDRMs, are aware of their vulnerability and have improved their knowledge and understanding of how the frequently recurring hazards are manageable and what is required to handle these situations successfully.
- The target group and the project staff have learnt about the approach of prevention and preparedness against hazards.
- The target group has learnt to apply new measures and techniques to cope with disasters.
- Communities are empowered by the strengthening of their disaster response capacities.
- Several communities are now safer and well prepared due to the rehabilitation of important social-infrastructure.
- The self-help potential of several communities is strengthened.

To a limited extent the project contributes to all of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), because it creates new capacities and reduces vulnerability. However, the term “contribution” seems to be rather exaggerated. As long as the project continues and is managed by qualified staff, some progress can be expected.

6 Sustainability

In contrast to the previous evaluation, the analysis regarding project sustainability comes to a less optimistic conclusion. During the interviews with many people from different stakeholder groups and educational backgrounds (e.g. from the Institute of National Disaster Management (INGC), the DTC, the LCDRM, peasant farmers) it was very clear that all initiatives came from the project and are expected to come from the project in the future. The sentence: “We are willing to follow and to participate!” was voiced frequently. When asked for their own ideas or possible local solutions, the respondents mostly reacted with irritation or consternation. Not a single interviewee had a suggestion or opinion for continuation, except that NGOs (Welthungerhilfe) could and should carry on.

The creation of CCL was an important step for a participatory community development. The involvement of teachers and students and the utilisation of schools as a forum for DRM training were very effective. Also the identification of risk zones and safety zones, and the preparation of evacuation routes were helpful prevention measurements. These were the most sustainable interventions initiated by the project.

With the project withdrawal it is uncertain if the communities will keep up this dynamic and DRM, but it is doubtful whether that DRM will be further promoted by the district administration.

7 Most important recommendations

In case a third phase should be approved, the project would have to modify and finalise the preparedness and prevention activities. Health topics should also be discussed with the target groups to justify the idea that evacuees' sites should be equipped with latrines and water sources, including water purification.

The problem of lack of maintenance for the radios, which are the main tools for the EWS, must be tackled as soon as possible. An option might be that the INGC, as the institution responsible for DRM countrywide, declares to take over this responsibility and provides means and human resources to do so. Alternatively, other solutions should be looked at, e.g. the handing out of mobile phones which can be maintained and charged more easily; and finally people would have a personal benefit by using the mobiles privately.

All interested communities should finalise their preparation of evacuees' routes, necessary rehabilitation work should be promoted and evacuees' sites must be prepared with water and sanitation basic infrastructure. Also, wherever feasible, a part of the area could be planted with fruit trees (e.g. lemon, coconut, banana and avocado), sugar cane and other plants to serve as an emergency reserve food stock.

A more strategic approach is recommended for Welthungerhilfe, the implementing NGO. It might have proved very helpful if the project had been integrated into a programme for rural development and food security. The author is aware that in Mozambique donors are currently reluctant to finance rural development projects, because donors' funding policy is actually more focused on budget support. This funding problem seems to be general for NGOs and ought to be discussed at a broader and higher level, to improve impact and sustainability of any project work.

A recommendation to DIPECHO is to design their programmes more strategically. This means that a DRR programme should be designed in three phases right from the start. The first phase should be used to establish the organised communication structure (LCDRMs, DTC, etc.); to assess DRM stakeholders' potential, including the private sector; to identify social-infrastructure needs regarding DRM (preparation and rehabilitation of evacuation routes, etc.); and to start by testing prevention and preparedness (PP) activities and, of course, capacity building.

The second phase should be used to modify, adapt and consolidate these PP activities; to accomplish social-infrastructure measures (latrines, wells, small bridges, etc.); promote DRM stakeholders' potential, and extension and continuation with capacity building.

The third phase should be used for project extension and consolidation, to accomplish remaining social-infrastructure measures, capacity development and project hand over.

An NGO's good performance in one phase should be a condition for accessing funds for the next phase. This would contribute also to a meaningful quality management of project outcomes and performance.

8 General conclusions and "lessons learnt"

Disaster risk reduction projects implemented in a context and under circumstances like Chinde District, without being embedded in a programme for rural development and food security, cannot be expected to have significant long-term impacts and sustainability.

Community based approaches regarding DRR must be developed and tested, in a way that communities become more independent from the public sector regarding DRR equipment (radio) or other support. That also means that potential and actual sources of income must be analysed and promoted.