

Evaluation of the DIPECHO IV “Enhancement of disaster resilience in Nampula and Zambezia” Project in Mozambique



Executive Summary

adelphi was commissioned by Welthungerhilfe on behalf of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) to evaluate the project “Enhancement of disaster resilience in Nampula and Zambezia” in Mozambique.

The evaluation was conducted along the five OECD DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcomes and impact, sustainability). In addition, adelphi drew recommendations and lessons learned.

The evaluation took place between January and March 2016 and the field mission between 31.01.-14.02.2016. It followed a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews covering five of nine districts of operation with partner organisations, community beneficiaries and government authorities. This was complemented by a document review. The evaluation rationale and approach are captured in the Terms of Reference and methodology paper.

This executive summary presents key results along the evaluation criteria, lessons learnt and recommendations.

Brief description of the project and framework conditions

Mozambique is prone to recurrent floods, cyclones and drought, which affect lives and livelihoods. Because a large portion of the population relies on natural resources for livelihoods and subsistence agriculture, these impacts significantly threaten the poorest and weaken the economic development of the country. Zambezia and Nampula are two adjoining coastal provinces in the northeast of the country, which face institutional challenges, high levels of poverty, and food insecurity and are highly vulnerable to climate variability and extreme events.

DIPECHO (ECHO's Disaster Preparedness department) funds this project in its fourth period (DIPECHO IV). The beneficiaries were the communities in or close to areas of disaster risk. The project was executed between May of 2014 and December of 2015 in nine districts in the two provinces by five international NGOs in cooperation with the *Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades* (INGC). Upon request of ECHO to form a consortium, Care International (CARE), the Mozambican and Spanish Red Cross (Red Cross), Concern Worldwide (Concern), Oikos and Welthungerhilfe joined forces for the implementation. All the organisations had worked extensively in the country before, including in other funding periods of DIPECHO. The intervention was viewed as the consolidation of this work.

The project of approximately 1.5 million Euro applied a spectrum of disaster risk management (DRM) measures with the aim to increase the capacities to assess, mitigate and respond to disaster risks of government institutions, civil society organisations and communities at all levels. The intervention included components on (1) capacities for preparedness, response and resilience at different administrative levels; (2) work on built environment to prevent disasters and manage shelters; (3) backing for livelihood measures to increase resilience, including through Farmer Field Schools (FFS); and (4) mainstreaming of DRM at the provincial and national levels.

Relevance

The overall relevance of the project's objectives is high in terms of alignment with the priorities of the target group, the Mozambican government and donor strategies.

The project objectives are aligned with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries and community groupings to reduce community and household vulnerability and protect their lives and belongings in the face of increasing climatic hazards.

The project is in line with the government's disaster management system coordinated by INGC, with the country's National Development Plan (which establishes disaster risk reduction as a strategic

objective for the country), and with the *Lei de Gestão de Calamidades* adopted by the National Assembly in 2014.

The intervention focuses on the development of capacities at the community level, preparedness plans, rescue and emergency equipment and training, improvement of food and nutrition security, which are established priorities of the DIPECHO 2014 Regional Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) for Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean adopted by ECHO.

Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the project was moderately high, primarily at the level of local committees, and secondarily at the district level (although not in all districts of implementation). The project was more effective in achieving results 1, 2 and 3 but faced important challenges in making progress towards result 4 (which focused on the national level).

It was particularly effective in the area of empowering communities and building awareness and readiness through activities with local committees (CLGRC), developing contingency plans, access to early warning and embedding them in the community (result 1). However, effectiveness at the level of province and central levels was more limited.

Regarding the activities to retrofit public infrastructure and support the management of community shelters, the project had high effectiveness (result 2). Overall, the planned targets in this result were achieved. The visited communities were largely in charge and conscious of the infrastructure management.

There is indication that the project was effective in the area of livelihood support through valuable activities in conservation agriculture and fish and mangroves management (result 3). However, the measurement of effectiveness against the change in percentage of targeted households reporting better resilience was not possible in this evaluation because of non-availability of a quantitative baseline and endline study that provides the basis for comparison.

Result 4, as defined at the beginning of the project, was not achieved and attainment of the established indicators is moderately low. While sharing of information through meetings and lessons learned with the national level was achieved (indicator 4.3), mainstreaming of DRM activities in the agenda and budgets of key ministers was not achieved (indicator 4.1). Likewise, the linkages between provincial level and national level could not be established by the project (indicator 4.2). This was due to a limited length of the DIPECHO IV project combined with delays imposed by emergencies and elections and significant political centralization that challenged the access to INGC and key ministries.

Efficiency, coherence and coordination

There was **indication that cost-effectiveness was taken into account in planning and during operations**. However, conclusive evidence was not gathered through a cost-benefit analysis as part of the evaluation. The **overall assessment of coherence and cooperation in the consortium is moderately high**.

Aspects related to cost-effectiveness

Local conditions shaped important aspects related to cost-effectiveness. As far as noticeable during this evaluation and considering limiting local conditions such as high travel costs, there is indication that cost-effectiveness has been moderately high. For example, the technical meetings for coordination were always held in Maputo with Maputo-based staff. In the case of Concern, technical staff was based close to the communities, keeping to some extent the travel costs in check.

A political decision to only provide entire emergency kits to communities (and not customised according to communities' needs), has important implications on cost-effectiveness, as kits are some of the most expensive inputs in the project.

Coherence and cooperation among the partner NGOs

The five members of the consortium had submitted separate proposals to ECHO for DIPECHO IV funding. Upon express request by ECHO to join forces, the five NGOs formed a consortium with Welthungerhilfe in the lead.

The five organisations have made impressive progress working as a coherent consortium since the beginning of the project. Before starting cooperation in 2014, they had worked autonomously for many years. Welthungerhilfe facilitated the process of establishing a consortium and played a pivotal role galvanising the support of the other implementing partners.

There was a broad coherence in operational approaches. Even so, there are differences among partners in the understanding of resilience, with the Red Cross focusing more on the moment of emergency and aspects of security of lives, while the other organisations focus more on preventive aspects and human security aspects in times of non-emergency.

Internal project M&E system

The project faced several challenges in the area of M&E, including the lack of a baseline study, limited budget, delays, lack of use of aggregate-level indicators in the individual monitoring by each consortium organisation, an over-ambitious establishment of objectives and some issues in logframe quality.

Outcomes and impacts

The DIPECHO IV project is the continuation of other DIPECHO activities. This continuity has allowed for longer-term engagement in the communities, which can enable more impactful conditions than a short 18-month project normally would.

Capacity development measures with the communities have shown results at the level of outcomes and these have the potential to translate into meaningful impacts. Beneficiaries told the evaluation that they have seen changes in their lives. However, **outcomes are mainly limited to the community and district level as the project has not achieved targeted results at the national level.**

Use of output

Although there is limited quantitative information on the number of people that took up the activities for which they were trained there is indication of beneficiaries' genuine commitment and satisfaction with the infrastructure and conservation agriculture measures. For example, a CARE study found that of all the members of the previous class of the FFS, at least 80 per cent adopted at least one of the techniques learned.

The interviews indicate that the participants in trainings retain the knowledge. During field visits, committee and community members explained in detail the techniques with which they constructed new public infrastructure with the support of the project with a rich level of detail. There is also anecdotal proof that they are using their infrastructure knowledge in their everyday work, some of them for remuneration.

Outcomes and impact in agricultural and fishing productivity and food security

The work on agricultural techniques is a challenging field of action for proving impact achieved in two years. Nevertheless all the members of FFS that were interviewed were vocal about the positive effects that the new techniques have had in the FFS fields. Several beneficiaries report improvements in yields and diets from adopting sustainable agricultural techniques.

Social capital and socio-cultural outcomes and impact

Committee members are able to clearly explain their role and relevance in the community, and articulate the importance of creating contingency plans and knowing the community's resources, safe areas and evacuation routes. Communities recognise the value of having skills that help them advance as individuals and as members of the community. Ownership in the community has been strengthened in the process of building resilient infrastructure.

Environmental outcomes and impact

In the field of agriculture, according to CARE, the production techniques applied in FFS have improved the water infiltration rates in soils that tend to be sandy, and community members have expressed that this has made a difference during floods because they are less prone to washing away the crops.

The protection of mangroves through differentiated use of resources that communities seem to be carrying out independently has shown positive results, a stronger mangrove coverage and more molluscs in the habitat. As a result of the fish sanctuary promoted by CARE, the communities of Ilhas Koti have been reporting more fish and shrimp in the areas surrounding the sanctuary.

Sustainability

The evaluation concludes that **at this time**—briefly after concluding the project activities—**the potential for sustainability is moderate**. While socio-cultural and technical sustainability is moderately high, financial and institutional sustainability are more limited at different levels.

Securing sustainability has varied in the project by community and district, depending on the length of engagement of the project. As an example, the achievements in Chinde, where Welthungerhilfe began engagement years ago during previous DIPECHO phases, show institutional embeddedness of the local committee, and capacities for technical sustainability at the community and district government. In comparison, the achievements in Nicoadala and other “newer” districts, where the organisation first established contact at the beginning of DIPECHO IV in May 2014, although on a good track, still need more support to achieve similar sustainability.

Institutional and financial sustainability

The institutionalisation of the CLGRCs supported by the DIPECHO IV project is visible across the board. The members of the eight interviewed CLGRCs seem active, proud of being part of the committees and strongly anchored as key institutions in their communities.

At the district level, the project aimed to institutionalise DRM activities in district and provincial plans and budgets and supporting districts in the elaboration of their DRM and emergency plans. From eight districts of operation, the project successfully supported the development of DRR plans and emergency plans in five during DIPECHO IV (Ilha, Mossuril, Chinde, Luabo, Nicoadala). A portion of the groundwork for this was carried out before DIPECHO IV. Of these districts, three mainstreamed DRM activities into district plans (Mossuril, Angoche and Chinde). In Mossuril and Chinde, the activities were also reflected on budgets, which is a key component of financial sustainability.

Some of the committees are accompanied in the entire process by engaged district staff and political leaders, creating an enabling environment for sustainability. During the evaluation, evidence of this was gathered in Mossuril and project staff also pointed out that Chinde had an important level of institutionalisation at the level of committee and the district level.

Other economic-financial sustainability

A substantive part of the project carried out by CARE, Concern and Oikos aims to sustain nutrition and generation of income through strong agricultural and natural resource practices. In interviews, members of the community stated that agricultural yields have increased and the quantity of fish and molluscs gathered by the communities has improved as a result. However, financial sustainability has been identified as an important obstacle in communities that struggle for self-reliance and sufficiency.

Welthungerhilfe and Concern carried out trainings in Chinde on generation of alternative income, exploring potential from fisheries and agriculture. However, the evidence collected from visited communities¹ does not show strong examples of financial sustainability that stem from the community.

Financial sustainability is also limited within the local committees and their need e.g. to maintain their equipment. In Boila (Ilhas Koti, Angoche) committee members established a savings group inside the committee. These saving rounds provided an important cushion for the committee members when heavy rains hit the Ilhas Koti during the project. On this occasion they needed to use up all the funds and did not continue with the initiative thereafter.

Socio-cultural and technical sustainability

An attitude of self-help and everyday responsibility in reducing disaster risks has been triggered in the visited communities and is palpable. Overall, during the interviews committee members showed motivation, enthusiasm and commitment to continue work now that DIPECHO IV has concluded.

¹ The evaluation could not visit Chinde because of difficult accessibility during the rainy season

Among the most effective activities within the project in order to promote self-sustainability of the committees have been the capacity building measures that emphasise self-help methods that can be sustained with own efforts (in construction, agriculture and mangrove protection).

In extensive descriptions of the capacity development process by the partners and interviews with the beneficiaries, the evaluation distinguished that the trainings were not once-off activities, but that a handholding process often involving the responsible district took place, with consultation to determine the information and knowledge the trainees acquired and the gaps that could still be filled.

At the time of the evaluation, the strong ownership of the committees with the results achieved so far in the project is prominent. Although the conscience of the need to carry out regular maintenance seems to be there in several communities, in others it is not as strong.

Conclusion and Lessons learned

The evaluation concludes that the DIPECHO IV project had an overall positive assessment with some limitations, as summarised in the table below.

Criterion	Overall assessment*
Relevance	High
Effectiveness	Moderately high
Cost-effectiveness, coherence and coordination	Indication of moderately high efficiency Moderately high levels of coherence and coordination
Outcomes and impact	Potential for moderately high impact at the community and district level Low impact at the national level
Sustainability	Moderate

*A scale of the following possible ratings was used to assess the achievement: High, Moderately high, Moderate, Moderately low, Low.

Lessons learned that we can draw from the evaluation include:

- Visuals, materials and hands-on experimental approaches are a powerful pedagogical tool.** Part of the training means includes demonstration fields. But probably the most striking part of the fields promoted by CARE is the fact that they provide *visual comparison* between old and new techniques. Two plots that lie side by side are treated differently in the process of experimenting that the students embark on.
- Uniting groups can break down silos at the community level.** Members of the consortium have been promoting working in larger groups (CARE through Community Natural Resource Management Committees, CGR, and Welthungerhilfe through Commissions of Communal Life), rather than fragment into different committees operating in communities in parallel. These groupings integrate different existing committees that have largely been created in communities following sectoral lines, often with overlap in membership among community committees
- Up-scalability.** Based on the observed activities and interviewed communities, the evaluation found valuable pilot interventions, particularly in the infrastructure construction with community involvement and build-back-better techniques with the assistance of UN Habitat, the farmer field schools (FFS), the reconstitution of mangroves that could be picked up by others and scaled up.
- Policy dialogue through a strong evidence base.** The partnership between the implementing consortium and UN Habitat in the country has produced an important body of evidence. This body of demonstration projects will set the basis for policy dialogue through dissemination, advocacy for integrating improved techniques and norms into national guidelines and the new national Construction Code, which is developed currently by the Ministry of Public Works.
- Using exchange between peers.** In an example used by the Red Cross, this type of exchange of opinions between peers has a positive explanatory effect that is not as easily attained when the information is provided by project staff.

Main recommendations for implementing organisations and ECHO

1. Engagement with the national government

- In order to have an impact at the national and provincial levels, invest in raising awareness with national and provincial institutions since day 1.
- Document the successes of pilot interventions with qualitative and quantitative data and plan and budget data collection in advance.
- Partner with relevant organisations that have leverage at high levels. Continue the partnership with those whose mandate place them in a strong position to accompany this process to the national level (e.g. UN Habitat). If appropriate, approach central levels possibly supported by the facilitation of ECHO or the European Delegation.
- Besides these areas of activity, consider whether international NGOs are the right actor to engage in this kind of work at the national level.

2. Strengthen consortia by making learning part of the culture and building coherence

- For DIPECHO IV, ECHO promoted a consortium of implementing organisation, which was difficult at the beginning, but worked in a coordinated and coherent manner throughout the project. In the planning of further funding periods, it would be valuable that if the circumstances allow, ECHO continues to engage with consortia that were created upon its request and not individually with separate organisations.
- For organisations that have been operating in the country for some time, begin the work on gathering and exchanging lessons learned across the consortium as soon as the project kicks off.
- Strengthen team dynamics within the consortium by ensuring the field staff gets to know each other and exchange on common challenges and solutions.
- Engage the consortium in conversations to deconstruct assumptions and theories of change early in the project and revisit the conversation periodically.
- Emphasize a more common understanding of key concepts, e.g. resilience among partners. Place a priority on discussing differing understandings and drawing common approaches.
- Measure effectiveness in similar, comparable units.

3. Invest in sustainability of benefits

- Further support to consolidate results need to ensure that the responsible districts accompany the local committees, understand and are able to carry out their support responsibilities with communities.
- Continue cementing the work to mainstream DRM in district plans and budgets in order to secure financial sustainability, following examples like Chinde and Mossuril.
- In addition, continue to establish and encourage savings groups and alternative income activities, such as CARE's initiative to foster small businesses in the communities that sell improved plant varieties for agriculture.

4. Evidence-based policy-making

- Take the time and effort during similar projects to carefully gather data to support evidence-based advocacy. One of the strengths of DIPECHO IV was the existence of valuable pilot interventions that can be replicated (e.g. building capacities for resilient construction with local materials).
- Resource a communication responsible in future projects to capture lessons learned, facilitate knowledge exchange among partners and with external actors.

5. Be realistic in setting project objectives and indicators

- Encourage implementing partners to strive for realistic, achievable objectives and indicators.