DIPECHO-IV Mozambique Consortium: Report on the positive impact of the DRR-activities carried out through the consortium

The floods affecting Zambezia province last January and February and the rains in early March 2015 in the Nampula province registered the highest emergency levels in the last 50 years. Post-emergency assessments show significant damages in the region. However, the consortium of 5 organizations is happy to report some noticeable progress and positive practices and impacts resulting from the DIPECHO interventions during the past years in these regions.

✓ **Good coordination** means less gaps and overlaps in humanitarian response. The coordination efforts developed in the last years by different stakeholders involved in the shelter cluster have been reflected in this year’s emergency response. A good example of this is the standardization of shelter kits according to the guidelines given by CVM/SRC. In fact, Government Authorities (INGC) use nowadays the same shelter kit model than the International Federation Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies does.

Also, as a result of this coordination, stakeholders have shared a coherent and complimentary way of working during the emergency response. As an example: CONCERN deployed shelter items to the beneficiaries identified by INGC, who were trained by CVM about how to properly use those items. In addition to this, CVM/SRC has trained on “shelter kits and how to build an emergency shelter” to other stakeholders during the emergency. This training has been held on demand of the Mozambican Government and as a DIPECHO IV activity linked to the emergency response. Through regular technical meetings and exchanges between the DIPECHO IV consortium members, information sharing and the quality of cooperation have significantly increased.

✓ **Training on risk management and emergency response** given by the different stakeholders to the Disaster Risk Management Committees (CLGRC) in the framework of different DIPECHO III and IV interventions have been absolutely determinant to the lives of their inhabitants, as they themselves acknowledge. Mr. Emilio Manuel (CLGRC Coordinator of Lugela-Namacurra) declares: “Floods of this year were especially hard. If we had not received the training from CVM/SRC-DIPECHO, this emergency would have been a big disaster where many of our familiars would have died. Fortunately, we are all alive”. Before the existence of the Disaster Risk Management Committees, the population would remain in the lowlands waiting to be rescued or have some support. Nowadays the
communities, especially in the “older” districts where DIPECHO has been implemented for a long time, leave early and voluntarily to the safe areas.

✓ The existence of an organizational structure with participation of decision makers at different levels (Community, village and district administrative office) contributed to a quick transmission of information and making decision on preparedness measures. The coordination between the communal leadership with the Commission of Collective Life (Comissão de vida colectiva – CVC) and members of the Disaster Risk Management Committees has facilitated communication within the communities. As the committees are elected and do not represent the “structural” life of the communities – with representatives of the churches, of the elderly etc., they have some difficulties to influence people for behavior change and acceptance. With the Commission of Collective Life including all representatives of the village, they work hand in hand. Together they organize lectures and theaters for community awareness and this brings positive results which are reflected in the timely evacuation of the populations from risk to safe areas, reducing the risk of loss of life and property and with quick decision making.

✓ Moreover, the early warning mechanism works smoothly as information on the floods arrived on time in the communities (radio listening and radio communication in some communities equipped with radios), even though the situation was much worse than expected: some districts have not seen a flood of this dimension since 1971.

✓ The evacuation routes (bridges over water rivers) built through Welthungerhilfe were used during the emergency facilitating the exit from the lowlands to the highlands. According to beneficiaries (members of the Disaster Risk Management Committees and of the communities in Nicoadala district), the bridges for pedestrian built with local material helped to avoid the loss of human lives during the transfer from their houses to the temporary shelters as the risk of being dragged by the water flow was one of the highest during emergencies. And these bridges have a great impact in the communities as they are used daily to go from the village to the fields, for school students as well as for the transport of the products from the “machambas” to the village.

✓ The assessments carried out after floods proved the proper use and viability of collective emergency shelters rehabilitated by the different partners during DIPECHO III. Many families already built a home in the safe zone additionally to the house by the river where they have their fields. Some of them already using the techniques put in place with the help of UN-Habitat (building secure houses). Currently there are families with fields in the lower zone – prone to flooding, medium zone and high zone applying the messages disseminated through the DIPECHO projects. During the emergency in January and February 2015, the fields in the high area were not entirely affected and destroyed, which means that part of the planted crops (cassava and sweet potato, mainly) is available even if the quantity is not sufficient.

✓ The techniques of Conservation Agriculture (CA) are geared to help crops survive during times of draught. This is done by speeding up the rate of water infiltration into the soil, building organic matter and reducing evaporation. The use of soil coverage with mulch clearly helped
protect the fields from the excess of water by absorbing it instead of drowning the crops and then evaporating once the rain stopped.

Now, different activities (CARE, OIKOS) carried out in this field give evidence that CA is also helping farmers be more resilient to disasters - in the case - flooding.

The heavy rains or flooding destroyed infrastructure, people’s houses and many hectares of agricultural land. Crops in the districts of Moma, Larde, Mossuril and Angoche were destroyed. The Farmer Field Schools, which were funded by the project, seem to have endured the flooding thanks to the CA techniques they learned. When program staff visited three FFS after the rains, the comparison of the fields using CA and the ones using traditional practice showed the clear advantages of CA to help mitigate floods.

“You can see for yourself,” Amina Momade from the Mussuceia FFS said. “I planted this maize under CA and if it wasn’t for that this maize wouldn’t have withstood the flooding. I am sure that the harvest will not be much affected in this field.”

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