BUILDING RESILIENCE AND SHAPING THE FUTURE

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF CYCLONE IDAI IN SOUTHERN MALAWI

Trócaire

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Learning Review was developed thanks to the collaboration between Trócaire's Humanitarian and Development teams.

Members of the Learning Review team include Matthew Sarsycki (Technical Advisor, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience), Olive Moore (Head of Programme), Deirdre McArdle (Humanitarian Manager – Operations), Nelly Maonde (Regional Humanitarian Advisor), Phillip Nyasulu (Climate Justice and Disaster Risk Management Officer in Malawi), Edward Makoni (Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme Advisor in Zimbabwe).

We would like to thank CICOD, our partner organisation in Malawi.

We thank the programme participants for their engagement in the process. The active participation and input of the community members has supported the development of this Learning Review and helped to formulate recommendations for future programming.

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Cover image Members of a Village Civil Protection Committee (VCPC) participate in a focus group discussion in Chikwawa District, Malawi
Photo Cosmos Chakalamba/Trócaire

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Suzana Ligomeka's community was provided with 10 treadle pumps, irrigating 5 hectares of land for 44 households
Photo: Alan Whelan/Trócaire
Machinga
Malawi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Achieving positive impact while working in the field of resilience is a challenge faced by practitioners across the globe. While resilience aims to improve the ways that individuals, households, communities, civil society and institutions within a system have increased their ability to prepare for, withstand and recover from adversity, shocks and stresses (such as floods, storms, food insecurity and economic instability); we cannot always determine when and where these impacts will occur. Therefore, when natural or manmade hazards do occur in areas where resilience activities take place, it is imperative to follow up with vulnerable communities to improve learning about the experience.

Following the severe flooding (January and February 2019) and the devastation of Cyclone Idai (March 2019) which affected southern Malawi, Trócaire undertook a study in August 2019 to gain greater insight on the impact their resilience work in select communities of Chikwawa District. The study does not present the full story of what occurred throughout the southern part of the country, but it does highlight some lessons learned along with providing recommendations to improve resilience programming in the future. The lessons learned from this paper are described in greater detail throughout the work, with major findings highlighted below:

There is a consensus that Trócaire Resilience Programming contributes to strengthened household and community capacity to build resilience. This was determined by comparing the impact on communities with many of the same characteristics who were not part of the programme.

Community members in Trócaire programme areas understand the relationship between natural resource management and Disaster Risk Reduction, specifically by promoting tree planting and highlighting the importance of agroecology for long-term resilience.

There is a need to bring in experienced humanitarian expertise when working with communities on preparedness (not only during humanitarian responses). Similarly, other partners, not only traditional humanitarian actors should be involved in the response (including those working in women's empowerment, governance and livelihoods).

Many of the most positive resilience strategies highlighted by communities in the study area occurred prior to the flood/cyclone events. Longer term planning and implementation of activities such as relocation to higher ground, tree planting and crop diversification require inputs long before the rainy season to ensure adequate preparedness. Current and future programming should take this into consideration during programme design.

Related to the previous point, the need for longer term interventions to mitigate the impact of flooding, goes against the current system in place by government and many NGOs whose primary focus is on flood response. Therefore, in addition to longer term, community level preparedness and mitigation activities, there is a need to advocate for government interventions to address hazards before they occur. This includes working on issues of land access in many of the flood prone and upland areas of southern Malawi.

PURPOSE

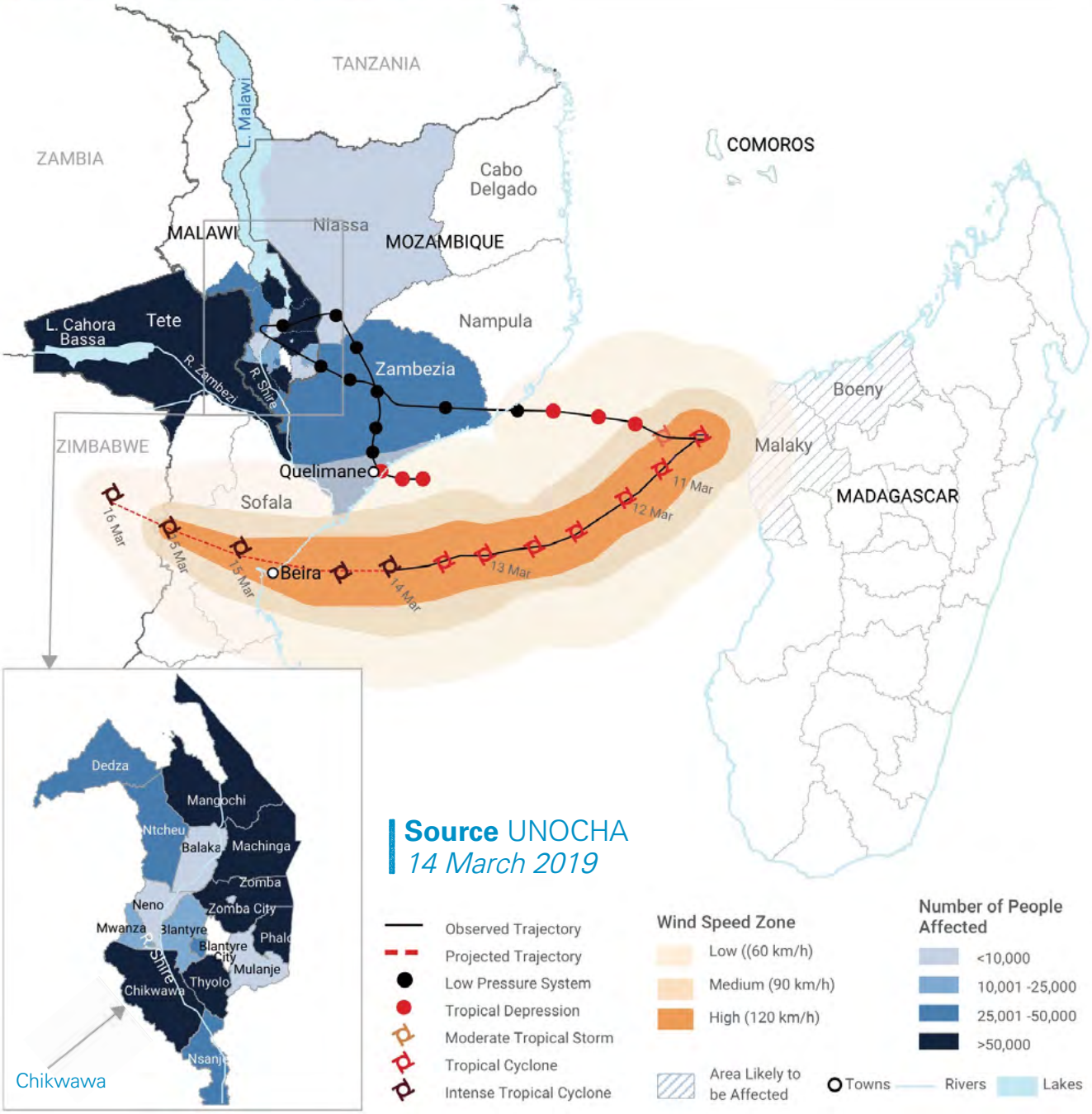
This paper is intended to contribute to increased learning for Trócaire and its partner organizations in Malawi, including Circle for Integrated Community Development (CICOD) whose programme areas were visited as part of this learning paper. It aims to provide insight relating to the impact of ongoing resilience building activities in target communities of Chikwawa District, Southern Malawi as a result of the recent flood and storm events from January – March 2019.

Learning derived for this paper and an accompanying piece on focusing on the recent drought (2018 – 2019) and Cyclone Idai (March 2019) in Zimbabwe (*Striving for Resilience: lessons learned from drought and Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe*) were developed to provide recommendations for current and future resilience building programmes in other Trócaire countries.

ACRONYMS

CCPM	Climate Change Programme Malawi
CICOD	Circle for Integrated Community Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female-Headed Household(s)
GVH	Group Village Head
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KII	Key Informant Interview
MHH	Male-Headed Household(s)
PwD	Person(s) with Disabilities
REAL	Resilience Enhancement for Livelihood Improvement
SCIAF	Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committee
VSL	Village Savings and Loan

CYCLONE AND FLOOD AFFECTED AREAS



Background

The southern African country of Malawi has a long history of natural disasters (floods, storms and droughts) and 2019 was no different. In late January, the nearby presence of Tropical Cyclone Desmond resulted in continuous rainfall in the southern part of the country. Within this period, extensive rainfall was reported in Blantyre, Chikwawa and Nsanje. Further heavy rain in February and early March resulted in increased flooding through Southern and Central Malawi displacing thousands of people.[1] Then, on 4 March 2019, Cyclone Idai made its first landfall and brought increased heavy rains to Malawi in the form of a tropical depression. The storm system again made landfall on 15 March in Mozambique with continuing impacts felt in Malawi and Zimbabwe. While Machinga and Zomba districts of Malawi were most affected, accounting for more than 29,000 affected households per district, Nsanje (18,000

1 Malawi Floods: Emergency Plan of Action (Feb 2019), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

households), Chikwawa (16,000 households) and Phalombe (22,848 households) recorded the highest number of displaced persons.[2] With agriculture being the main source of livelihoods, the heavy rains and floods greatly impacted the local economy as fields were inundated, and recently planted crops destroyed. Additionally, houses collapsed; with household items washed away. Heavy wind from Cyclone Idai also caused extensive property damage to household roofs and other structures. People with disabilities and the elderly were some of the most impacted during these events. In some cases, entire communities were displaced for as long as 12 weeks.

While the flood/storm events of 2019 did have significant impact, in Chikwawa and Nsanje, flooding is a reoccurring event, with both districts among the top 4 flood prone districts in the country.[3] As a result, many local and international NGOs are working in these districts due to the high levels of vulnerability and exposure to natural disasters. Furthermore, Chikwawa district does not seem to have a clear district strategy under implementation on how to find a long-term solution to the floods, with significant focus going towards flood responses. With much of the focus on responses, there is little corresponding strategy for long term flood control.

Introduction

Trócaire, in collaboration with Irish Aid and the Scottish Government through SCIAF, along with implementing partner CICOD have been working in Chikwawa District of Malawi on two resilience building programmes dating back to 2017, which are currently underway as of the date of this publication. Trócaire and CICOD have collaborated on resilience programming dating back to 2013. As with Trócaire's other resilience programmes in Malawi and throughout Africa, the aim of the programming is to ensure that individuals, households, communities, civil society and institutions within a system have increased their ability to prepare for, withstand and recover from adversity, shocks and stresses (such as floods, storms, food insecurity and economic crisis). Fostering improved learning around the topic of resilience often presents a challenge due to the fact that in order to truly see if communities' conditions are improving, this often cannot be understood until another shock or stress occurs in the target communities of the programme. More so, as each challenge faced by a vulnerable community is not the same, resilience practitioners must develop means to truly understand the impact of programming activities. Therefore, when disasters do occur in resilience programme areas, it is imperative to follow up with target communities to see how livelihoods and overall conditions have been impacted.

With this background in mind, Trócaire/CICOD put together a learning team comprised of staff from both agencies to visit communities impacted by the flood/storm events and interact with community members and other stakeholders to gain a greater understanding about:

1 The impact the flood/storm events had on the communities, particularly the most vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities

2 Strategies undertaken by communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from the flood/storm events

3 The impact (if any) resilience Trócaire/CICOD programme activities had in target communities for programme participants to prepare for, respond to and recover from the flood/storm events.

This paper provides the findings of the learning trip conducted from 12–16 August 2019. The intent of this document is to provide a snapshot of three communities impacted for the event, along with presenting some programming recommendations for how to address specific challenges that were highlighted.

2 2019 Flood Response Plan and Appeal, Republic of Malawi, Department of Disaster Management Affairs

3 Republic of Malawi, Department of Disaster Management Affairs (2019)

An income-generating beehive
Photo: Cosmos Chakalamba/Trócaire
Chambuluka
Malawi

Overview of Study Area

The joint Trócaire/CICOD team visited three villages (Khungubwe, Juma and Chambuluka) in Chikwawa district that were impacted by the flood and storm events. Both Khungubwe and Juma villages are located in Traditional Authority (TA) Ngowe. Chambuluka is located in TA Ngabu. Khungubwe is one of the communities implementing activities under the Climate Challenge Programme Malawi (CCPM), a Scottish Government Programme administered by the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) and implemented by Trócaire Malawi in collaboration with local partner organisations which is described in the section below. In addition to receiving inputs from the CCPM and based on initial needs assessments following the flooding and cyclone, Khungubwe also received assistance from Trócaire/CICOD in May and June 2019 as part of the recovery efforts from the flood/storm events of Feb and March 2019. A total of 461 households (208 FHH, 253 MHH) received distributions of maize seeds, potato vines, vegetable seeds, farming equipment (hoes), pangas (machetes), plastic sheeting and nails. Similarly, Chambuluka is part of the Irish Aid funded Trócaire Malawi and CICOD programme which is also described in greater detail below.

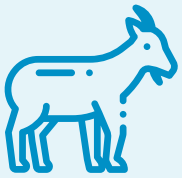
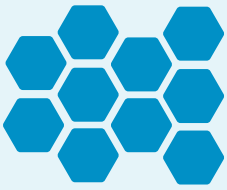
In addition to Khungubwe and Chambuluka villages, the study team visited the village of Juma, which is adjacent to Khungubwe and is in the same Group Village Head (GVH) area. As of the date of this document's publication, Juma has not received project support or humanitarian assistance from Trócaire/CICOD. However, as unmet needs were identified in Juma during the learning exercise, Trócaire /CICOD are exploring ways in which they can work with the community in the future. Juma was included in the study to gain understanding of the contrast between communities receiving support from Trócaire/ CICOD and those with little intervention from Trócaire/CICOD or other NGOs.

A focus group discussion in Khungubwe
Photo: Cosmos Chakalamba/Trócaire
Chikwawa District
Malawi

RESILIENCE PROGRAMMING

Climate Challenge Programme Malawi (CCPM)

This three year (2017-2020), £3.2 million programme is a Scottish Government programme, administered SCIAF (Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund) and implemented by Trócaire Malawi and eight Malawian partner organisations. The CCPM aims to enable vulnerable Malawian communities to identify and implement solutions to the climate challenges they face, with a focus to helping the most vulnerable, including women and girls, and promoting human rights. The programme is being implemented across 17 GVHs (Group Village Heads) in Balaka, Chikwawa, Machinga and Zomba districts. The following are the main areas of intervention for CCPM.

 **Enhanced Crop Production through Irrigation**	The programme promotes both rain-fed and winter irrigated cropping. Rain-fed cropping involves cereals like maize, sorghum and millet while winter cropping mainly involves maize and vegetables.
 **Livestock Production**	The programme distributes goats to vulnerable households (elderly PwD, FHHs and the sick). During distribution, messaging promotes using the "pass on" method in which project beneficiaries provide the same number of goats they received to the next group of beneficiaries after goats produce offspring.
 **Income-Generating Activities**	The programme promotes a series of income-generating activities (IGAs), including bee keeping and village savings and loan (VSL) groups.
 **Disaster Risk Management Activities**	The Village Civil Protection Committee (VCPC) is trained on conducting village resource and hazard mapping, along with developing action plans to reduce the impact of hazards in the area. Additionally, the VCPC works to disseminate evacuation messaging and help vulnerable groups (such as women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities) during evacuation.
 **Soil and Water Conservation Activities**	The programme promotes planting of trees and other vegetation to reduce erosion, absorb excessive water runoff and enrich soils.

Resource Rights and Use Programme

Trócaire and CICOD, as part of Trócaire's "Resource Rights and Use Programme" have been implementing CICOD's Resilience Enhancement for Livelihood Improvement (REAL) project in Chikwawa district since 2016, with funding from Irish Aid. The project will run from 2016 – 2021. The overall project goal is to enhance resilience and increase the capacity of poor, marginalised and vulnerable people affected by yearly drought in Chikwawa district to secure sustainable and just livelihoods. The project covers a total of 15 villages across 3 GVHs in Chizenga, Chambuluka and Maluwa. The following are the main outcomes of the project.

Agricultural Livelihood Improvement	The project works with households to use and save a diversified range of good quality seeds. Additionally, activities focus on converting to agro-ecological approaches and practicing sustainable agricultural practices/ techniques such as intercropping and mulching. Vertical gardening is also promoted under this component of the project.
Improve Household Nutrition through On-Farm Production	The project works with farmers to assess their farm's whole resource base and plan for a more holistic farming system which incorporates land stewardship.
Increasing Savings and Access to Credit	The project works with households to have new skills and access to credit and savings facilities for their off-farm micro-business activities from well-run savings and loans groups.
Natural Resource Management and Disaster Risk Reduction	The project work with households and local, VCPCs to increase capacity to manage natural resources and build resilience to climate change and climate variability through development of risk mapping and action planning activities which include regeneration of the natural environmental through planting of trees and developing contingency plans related to hazards such as floods and cyclones.

Study Criteria

Study criteria were developed by the Trócaire team and is divided into the following three categories:

Strategies for Resilience
Examines the actions and activities that communities undertook before, during and after the flood/cyclone event. This includes both positive and negative preparedness and coping strategies. Some of these activities were a component of ongoing Trócaire programming (described above) and others were undertaken within communities themselves or involved the government or other NGO actors.

Factors for Resilience
Examines the enabling factors that allowed the communities to undertake positive strategies to absorb and adapt the impacts of the flood/cyclone event.

Adapting for Resilience
Examines the actions identified by communities that will or should be continued to both recover from the flood/cyclone events and to better prepare for future events. This category aims to capture key learning and identify anything that could be done differently in the future.

Study Methodology

To inform this study, a team from Trócaire (4 staff) and CICOD (5 staff) used the methods listed below to collect information. Field work took place on 13 and 14 August 2019.

Desk Review
Documents from the two projects (mentioned above) were reviewed along with background descriptions for each community, along with post disaster monitoring data and needs assessments documents following Cyclone Idai for TAs Ngowe and Ngabu.

Direct Observation/Transect Walks
During visits to the communities, while Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) were underway, Trócaire/CICOD staff conducted transect walks to observe notable features inside each community including areas impacted by the floods/cyclone, households and communal areas implementing project activities and any other notable features relating to community flood/storm resilience. During the transect walks, short, informal conversations were held with community members to provide more information.

Focus Group Discussions
The Trócaire/CICOD team conducted a total of 9 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community members from the three study areas, with a total of ***68 participants, 39 women and 29 men.***

Focus Group Participants	Number of Participants	Location
Women	5	Khungubwe Village
Men	6	
VCPC	7 (2M / 5F)	
Women	11	Juma Village
Men	7	
Youth (12-18)	6 (4M / 2F)	
Women	10	Chambuluka Village
Men	6	
VCPC	10 (4M / 6F)	

Key Informant Interviews
A total 7 people were interviewed (focusing on community leaders) from each of the three study areas.

Community Members & Other Stakeholders Interviewed	Number of Interviews
Group Village Head: Khungubwe, Juma and Chambuluka villages	3
VCPC Chair: Khungubwe and Chambuluka villages	2
Chairperson of Village Savings and Loan: Khungubwe and Chambuluka villages	2 (F)
Total Interviews	**7 (5M / 2F)**

Community Reflection
On 14 August 2019, 9 Community members from Chambuluka village participated in a community reflection exercise. Rather than focus on specific aspects leading up to and following the flooding/cyclone events which was covered in the FGDs and KIIs, participants were asked to reflect on their community more generally to provide insight relating to any aspect affecting or enabling long term resilience to natural hazards in general.

Debrief with Trócaire/CICOD team and Trócaire Malawi
Following each day of data collection, the Trócaire/CICOD team held debrief sessions to summarize the key learning areas and develop a common understanding of the context. On 16 August 2019, Trócaire staff who participated in the study shared their initial findings with Trócaire Malawi.

FINDINGS

Flood damage
Photo: Cosmos Chakalamba/Trócaire
Khungubwe
Malawi

Table 1

Village	BEFORE 4 years to 1 day before	DURING 1 day prior to the event to 3 weeks following	AFTER 3 weeks after to August 2019
Khungubwe	Relocating Permanent structures to higher land in 2015-2016	VCPC Provided evacuation messages, assisted with evacuation, targeting women, children, elderly and PwDs*	Government and NGOs provide seeds (maize and vegetables) for winter cropping*
	DRR Risk Mapping and evacuation awareness raising increased rain in the forecast*	Received assistance from family members, government, NGOs and churches (e.g. food, soap, tents, cooking utensils)*	Affected households in Village Savings and Loans group accessed rotating fund to rebuild homes*
	Tree Planting*	Received assistance from Trócaire in form of dignity kits (soap, reusable sanitary pads, underwear, chitenge (garment), bucket, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, solar lamp)*	Sold Goats*
	Dike Construction	Transactional Sex for food and supplies amongst community members	Transactional Sex for food and supplies amongst community members
	Crop Diversification (maize, sweet potato, sorghum, millet)*	Stealing Assets	
Juma	Relocating Permanent structures to higher land in 2015-16	Transactional Sex for food and supplies amongst community members	Transactional Sex for food and supplies amongst community members
	Crop Diversification*		
Chambuluka	Tree Planting and regeneration of vegetation (e.g. protection shrubs)*	VCPC Provided evacuation messages, assisted with evacuation, targeting women, children, elderly and PwDs*	Reconstruction of stronger houses (building back better)
	Crop Diversification*	Transactional Sex for food and supplies amongst community members	Transactional Sex for food and supplies amongst community members
			Increased charcoal production
			Male migration to Mozambique to look for work
			Sold goats*

KEY	positive preparedness or coping strategy	could have both positive and negative impacts	negative coping strategy

* involved Trócaire/CICOD inputs for resilience programmes or from START Fund supported humanitarian response (in the case of Khungubwe)

Strategies for Resilience

During the FGDs and KIIs, participants from the communities were asked to describe their experience with the flood/storm events and to identify specific actions that they took to prepare for and cope with the disaster before, during and after the event occurred. The table found on the next page presents a summary of the actions described by the communities. Contents of this table contain both *positive* and *negative* coping strategies which are highlighted in the table.[1] *Positive* strategies were identified as actions that were undertaken by most of the community that did not have any adverse effects in the short- or long-term on people's mental or physical wellbeing, income or assets. Additionally, these are strategies and actions that did not pose a significant threat or negative impact on the natural environment. *Negative* strategies are considered the opposite and could have caused short- or long-term harm to people's mental or physical wellbeing, income or assets in addition to damaging the natural environment.

Table 1 highlights several notable trends across the three villages:

· The highest number of positive strategies were highlighted before the event occurred, with many strategies focusing on long term planning, notably the relocation of permanent structures in low lying areas for Khungubwe and Juma villages. Semi-permanent and permanent relocation to higher ground was also something that also came out during the initial needs assessments during the response phase. In addition, all three villages identified crop diversification as a key strategy to prepare for the flood/storm event as the different crop varieties mature at different times.

· Khungubwe and Chambuluka both highlighted the importance of the VCPC and the emphasis on planting trees to limit soil erosion and help with drainage following heavy rains. However, in some cases the scale of the disaster meant that these actions did not withstand the impact of the cyclone.

· Regarding negative strategies, the prevalence of transactional sex amongst community members for food and supplies both during and after the food/storm events occurred in all three villages is concerning. This highlights the need for increased emphasis on protection issues before, during and after crisis. Other protection risks identified included increased early/unwanted pregnancy, sexual exploitation, increased cases of HIV and STIs and migration.

· For the selling of goats, which occurred in both Khungubwe and Chambuluka villages where they had been distributed as part of the CCPM and REAL projects, this action is only seen as a negative coping strategy if community members were selling their last living livestock. In cases where goats had reproduced and there was a surplus, selling them for income to help with the recovery is seen as positive.

· It was clear, through both direct observation and through conducting the FGDs and KIIs that Khungubwe and Chambuluka villages were more prepared for the flood/storm events compared to Juma village. While this study cannot offer a comprehensive answer if the Irish Aid supported and CCPM programmes is one main reason for increased resilience, the table below presents the positive coping strategies practices across all three villages and those which are associated with the project:

Time	Positive Coping Strategies	Positive Coping Strategies Associated with CCPM and IAPF
Before	5	3
During	3	3
After	3	2
Total	**11**	**8**

1 There were many other activities identified during this process including: BEFORE: reinforcing roofs, constructing household drainage, using indigenous knowledge systems to raise awareness of upcoming storms; DURING: Evacuating to higher ground, other villages being temporarily located in Khungubwe, foraging for wild roots and vegetables; AFTER: provision of NFI kits (sheets/nails), training on vertical gardens, and conducting piecework. However, there was not a majority of the participants in the groups who identified this as a positive or negative strategy

Table 2

Positive Preparedness or Coping Strategy	Enabling Factors
Relocation of Permanent Structures to Higher Land	· Understanding of community groups that their relocation did not mean giving up their land in low lying areas, which they still cultivate, they have permanent structures in areas that are not as vulnerable – although many were still impacted by the flood/storm events · Strong community leadership to negotiate areas for community groups to have permanent structures along with buy-in from upland community · A comprehensive understanding of community groups of the risks they face relating to flooding and the need to address this
All activities carried out by the VCPC DRR Risk Mapping, evacuation awareness, assisting with evacuation, targeting women, children, elderly and PwDs	· Presence of a functioning VCPC with volunteers who meet regularly and have an inherent understanding of the risks faced within the community
Crop Diversification millet, sorghum, maize	· An understanding by community groups of the need to rely on multiple crops, not only in relation to harvesting prior to flood/storm events, but in general · Provision of technical training on crop diversification techniques from Trócaire/CICOD resilience programmes and previous activities from other NGOs
Tree Planting	· An understanding by community groups of the need to rely on multiple crops, not only in relation to harvesting prior to flood/storm events, but in general · Provision of tree seedlings and technical training from Trócaire/CICOD resilience programmes
Dike Construction	· Communities working alongside government and other stakeholders to implement dike construction in areas beneficial to majority of communities living in the high-risk areas.
Receiving Emergency Assistance	· Functioning emergency response system comprised of multiple actors including government, NGOs, community groups and churches to provide immediate assistance
Seeds for Winter Cropping	· Functioning recovery system comprised of multiple actors including government and NGOs · Understanding of the importance of crop diversity in provision of multiple seed varieties · Presence of residual moisture for seed varieties to germinate
Accessing funds through VSL Group for reconstruction efforts	· Functioning VSL groups · VSL members who were not as heavily impacted by the flood/storm event allowed the most impacted to access the rotating fund prior to their usual place in the group
Reconstructing stronger homes during recovery phase	· Understanding by communities, namely women to have stronger structures to withstand flood waters and high winds.

Factors for Resilience

When looking at the positive preparedness and coping strategies and using inputs from the FGDs and KIIs, the Trócaire/CICOD team looked to identify factors for why these positive activities were able to take place.

Table 2 highlights two notable trends across the two villages:

· Many of the positive preparedness and coping strategies that were implemented required buy-in from many community members. Buy-in for these activities was easier in areas where communities had an increased understanding of the inherent risk faced related to flooding and cyclones.

· Prior to the Trócaire/CICOD resilience programming, VCPCs and VSL groups were functioning in Khungubwe and Chambuluka.

Additional activities and training from the resilience programmes enhanced the existing responsibilities of these groups. Forming new groups and committees, rather than working through existing structures could create issues of sustainability following the conclusion of resilience programming.

Adapting for Resilience

One critical aspect of resilience building is adapting to changing conditions by learning how to change current practices to fare better in the future. Community members were asked what they would do differently in the future to prepare for flood/storm events and they were asked to reflect on what they themselves could do; what Government, Trócaire/CICOD or other stakeholders should do. Below are the communities' recommendations for the various levels of Household/Community, government, and Trócaire/CICOD.

Household & Community

· There is a strong need for community members to adjust their planting season to avoid late harvest which typically occurs at the beginning of the flooding season. Planting early maturing crops and harvesting by November was highlighted as a key strategy moving forward

· Expand the water and soil conservation practices using the techniques advocated for in the resilience programmes such as intercropping and mulching

· Continue to plant trees and other vegetation to retain moisture and create additional wind breaks

· Promote controlled livestock grazing to prevent destruction of newly planted trees and other vegetation

· VCPCs are one of the strongest components to prepare and respond to flood/storm events. However, VCPC members expressed that there are not enough members of the groups to provide adequate messaging and evacuation efforts during large scale events like the ones that occurred in early 2019. Therefore, there is a need to expand the volunteers who assist with these activities, especially in assisting women, children, elderly and PwDs. They don't need to be official group members but additional focal points to assist with evacuation are needed

· Comprehensive risk mapping (VCPCs) to inform best location for activities out of flood prone areas

· Continue to advocate to build permanent structures on higher ground, outside of the low-lying areas

· Where possible, raise foundations of houses above flood levels and strengthen roofs to avoid wind/rain damage

Joseph Mwale, Lead Farmer, demonstrating multi-cropping and agroforestry. Farmers are able to harvest different crops at different times of the year – increasing family food security – while enhancing soil fertility.
Photo: Jeannette Wijnants/Trócaire
Machinga District, Malawi

Government

· Preposition food and other materials needed for response closer to high risk communities to ensure more timely distribution of emergency response, such as in or near evacuation centres

· Irrigation schemes provided to communities for winter cropping should not be implemented in flood prone areas

· Support communities with afforestation projects

· Provide regular awareness meetings on early warning systems

· Provision of preschool for children so that women can engage in piecework

Trócaire/CICOD or other NGOs

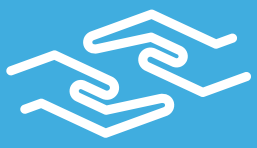
· Provide training and technical support to improve household construction involving raising foundations and securing stronger roofs

· Partner with government to provide communities with regular awareness raising meetings for early warning systems and provide equipment to VCPCs for preparedness such as megaphones, rain gauges, rain boots and first aid kits

· Accompaniment of VCPCs for activities such as risk mapping etc, including refresher trainings

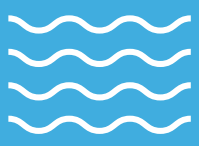
· Encourage exchange visits with neighbouring communities to promote cross learning for all resilience building activities such as VCPCs, conservation agriculture, tree planting, beekeeping, and VSLs

These recommendations highlight several notable trends based on what activities communities will continue or change in the future to prepare for and cope with floods and cyclones:



· In villages implementing Trócaire/CICOD resilience programming, communities report many activities which they can undertake or expand themselves, notably tree/vegetation planting; however, government and NGOs have a critical role to play in terms of consistent technical assistance. Follow-up visits, refresher trainings and cross-learning visits are something that could be undertaken by these actors to support activities on the ground.

· Greater coordination prior to disaster events between the district Disaster Management Office, NGOs and the VCPCs is critical to ensure timely evacuation and emergency assistance.



· In general, Chikwawa District is located in a flat, low lying area prone to floods and storms. Therefore, activities undertaken by communities, government or NGOs should utilize an appropriate risk analysis to ensure they are not located in high-risk areas.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main aim of this learning paper was to identify preparedness measures and coping strategies of communities in Chikwawa District following the experience of the flood and storm events of 2019. The following table presents challenges and recommendations developed by Trócaire/CICOD based on this learning.

Challenges	Recommendations
Protection issues, such as the prevalence of transactional sex was identified with little prompting in all villages in the study	· There is a need to mainstream protection with all partners and targeted community groups · Focus of mainstreaming protection should be on information sharing, staff behavior, mapping and referrals · Reach out to women's empowerment and protection actors, including from local Government (e.g. gender desks) to facilitate risk analysis, enhance prevention and response to SGBV before, during and after an emergency · Emergency preparedness to engage or link in with GBV/Protection actors
The trees and other plant species used in tree planting and natural regeneration activities are not native to the region and have difficulty surviving during dry period	· Promote indigenous trees or other species that are more adapted to the region · Any species of tree or other vegetation introduced, there will need to be adequate steps taken to ensure they are not eaten/destroyed by livestock
Some community members expressed the feeling that community ownership for some resilience programming activities is low; they are seen as a Trócaire/CICOD initiative, not one of the communities'	· Training of partner and communities on Participation and Community engagement; rights-based approach · Identify empowerment approaches such as engaging communities in the monitoring and management of the programme
Resilience programming addresses many challenges vulnerable communities face; however there are many underlying issues in the communities such as education, reproductive health and government policy	· Bring in/link with other actors to address some areas where Trócaire/CICOD does not have capacity to address (e.g. Protection, shelter) · Map out key challenges and look for entry points to address through advocacy at the national level · Support access to markets, cooperatives · Ensure Trócaire/CICOD are engaging in the development of District-level development plans so that resilience programming is complemented by other interventions
While communities received long term forecasting which highlighted the prevalence of strong rains and storms for the upcoming rainy season, there was no localized warning system to inform communities of impending floods 1 day or several hours prior to their occurrence	· Provide rain gauges with risk levels to identify the potential for floods based on recent rain events · Develop system of "phone trees" amongst neighboring villages to inform of floods · Coordinate with Disaster Management Authority to disseminate messages to VCPCs · Equipping of committees · Use of indigenous early warning systems where localized scientific forecasts are not available. · Simulation exercises · Advocate for government to take the lead and work with communities to explore further allocation of land on higher ground through collaborative processes

LESSONS LEARNED

While no scientific conclusion can be drawn, the experience did provide a series of overall lessons related to this work which are highlighted below:

1

There is a consensus that Trócaire/CICOD Resilience Programming contribute to strengthened household and community capacity to build resilience. This was seen by visiting communities with many of the same characteristics who were not part of the programme.

2

Community members in Trócaire/CICOD programme areas understand the relationship between natural resource management and DRR, specifically by promoting tree planting and highlighting the importance of conservation agriculture for long term resilience.

3

There is a need to bring in experienced humanitarian expertise when working with communities on preparedness (not only during humanitarian responses). Similarly, other partners, not only traditional humanitarian actors should be involved in the response (including those working in women's empowerment, governance and livelihoods).

4

Many of the most positive resilience strategies highlighted by communities in the study area occurred prior to the flood/cyclone events. Longer term planning and implementation of activities such as relocation to higher ground, tree planting and crop diversification require inputs long before the rainy season to ensure adequate preparedness. Current and future programming should take this into consideration during programme design.

5

Related to the previous point, the need for longer term interventions to mitigate the impact of flooding goes against the current system in place by government and many NGOs whose primary focus is on flood response. Therefore, in addition to longer term, community level preparedness and mitigation activities, there is a need to advocate for government interventions to address hazards before they occur. This includes working on issues of land access in many of the flood prone and upland areas of southern Malawi

CONCLUSION

This learning paper, along with an accompanying document related to Resilience Programming in Zimbabwe (S*triving for Resilience: Lessons learned from drought and Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe*) is only one piece in a larger puzzle relating to how to build resilience in vulnerable rural communities. Moving forward, the intention is to use these documents to present findings related to activities promoted in the project and to design improved resilience programmes for Malawi, Zimbabwe and anywhere Trócaire works in the field of resilience.

Trócaire, Maynooth
Co. Kildare, Ireland
T +353 (0) 1 629 3333
F +353 (0) 1 629 0661
E info@trocaire.org

Trócaire, 50 King Street, Belfast
BT1 6AD, Northern Ireland
T +44 (0) 2890 808 030
F +44 (0) 2890 808 031
E infoni@trocaire.org

www.trocaire.org

Trócaire

Circle for Integrated Community Development
CICOD