



Credit: Oxfam Mozambique

HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY-BUILDING IN MOZAMBIQUE

Improving living and health conditions in Zambézia

Mozambique is described as the third most exposed African country to the risks of disaster, particularly floods, cyclones and drought. It is one of the world's worst affected countries in terms of climate change, resulting in high levels of poverty and vulnerability, and major impacts on natural resources and physical infrastructures.

Oxfam is building the capacity of Mozambique's civil society so it can effectively participate in disaster management, directly support affected and vulnerable people, and, in terms of the humanitarian situation, have a critical vision and voice.

CECOHAS, a local partner in Zambézia Province that specializes in issues including hygiene, water and sanitation, has been receiving project funds since 2013. It is a key actor in emergency responses in Zambézia, a province that is seasonally affected by floods.

FIGHTING VULNERABILITY

Mozambique is described as the third most exposed African country to the risks of disaster, particularly floods, cyclones, drought, earthquakes and cholera. Moreover, the country is facing considerable challenges in terms of climatic changes. This is due to its exposure to natural dangers and its high vulnerability.

Zambézia Province is located in Central Mozambique, having a boundary in the North with Nampula and Niassa Provinces through Ligonha and Lúrio Rivers in the South, with Sofala Province through Zambeze River, at the East with the Indian Ocean and at the West with Tete Province and the Republic of Malawi through Chire and Muloza Rivers, respectively. It has 22 districts, including the City of Quelimane and 3,892,854 inhabitants, with a population density of 36.7 inhabitants/km², in accordance with data from 2007 census, and about 400 km of coastal area.

Mozambique and particularly Zambézia Province is facing in a cyclical way phenomena of floods and cyclones, among other disasters, in view of its geographical location. These disasters cause losses of human lives, destruction of property and infrastructure, leaving families without shelter, water and lacking adequate sanitation, etc. Many international agencies have been making efforts to reduce the suffering of these families. However, the impacts are still limited, considering for instance the time that is lost to provide humanitarian assistance, mostly in view of its location out of the risk areas, the lack of knowledge over the local context and moreover there is the issue of sustainability during the withdrawal process.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL ACTORS

Oxfam Novib, through its work approach in the humanitarian sector, identified CECOHAS in Zambézia Province as its potential partner for the reinforcement of community capacities to face disasters through an investment process in themes of identity and mission, strategic humanitarian management, technical specialization, approach and organizational size. Oxfam embraced the challenge of elevating CECOHAS' capacity in the humanitarian context and in relation to international standards (ESFERA).

CECOHAS is a national NGO, established in 12/10/2002 with the purpose of promoting improved, sustainable, and low cost technologies in the family sector, within the humanitarian and sustainable community development linked to the water and sanitation sector, has been a member of FONGZA – Forum of Zambézia NGOs, for seven (7) years and has been deputy chairperson for three years of its mandate and it is also a member of African Network for Water and Sanitation.

CECOHAS activities include humanitarian actions in the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) component in the outskirts of Incidua Ward, the City of Quelimane, Zambézia Province; with a focus for community mobilization, family awareness towards the promotion of hygiene and good sanitation habits in their residential areas. This partnership also includes the transfer of knowledge and institutional support, rendering this organization a local reference NGO and a key actor in responses to emergencies and humanitarian work as a whole.

CECOHAS, within the framework of its partnership with Oxfam, is implementing a project of disaster risk reduction in Namacurra and Quelimane Districts and

projects of responses to emergencies in Nicoadala and Namacurra Districts, having taken part in emergency response in Mocuba in 2015. These actions took place in Zambézia Province, Mozambique. It should be noted that the above mentioned projects are a contribution of the actions of the central and local governments, and community authorities and leaders in a relationship of openness and effective coordination. The same feeling is shared by the benefitting communities who report considerable change in their behavior.

For CECOHAS it was an excellent opportunity to partner with Oxfam, as a world leader in WASH. CECOHAS, in this relationship of partnership with Oxfam, is consolidating the domain over issues of international standards of humanitarian assistance in WASH up to the point of constituting a strategic partner with the government, and international agencies and United Nations in terms of WASH.

HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY REINFORCEMENT PROGRAM

In 2013 Oxfam initiated a humanitarian capacity reinforcement program for national humanitarian actors, where CECOHAS is part of the program. Along that period, various training teams were realized, resorting on the one hand on direct technical assistance by Oxfam specialists and on the other hand in themes, such as institutional strength, leadership and logistics in the context of emergency, gender in emergency, strategic financial management, sphere standards, conception of humanitarian policy, reformulation of the strategic vision, direct participation in responses to emergencies and national and international exchange of experience. CECOHAS has also benefitted from financial resources to support its functioning and purchase of the necessary basic equipment, where it was acquired circulating means, financial management packages, among other equipments.

The project's aim is to contribute towards the improvement of the living and health conditions of the community through the strengthening of institutional capacity of the Mozambican civil society organizations in quality service provision within humanitarian framework in contexts of emergency, providing safe water, basic sanitation and collective and individual hygiene. With the project's objectives, it is intended to increase the resilience of the communities and render them more able in terms of reducing risks of disasters through environment sanitation programs where Oxfam Novib plays an important role in the technical and financial support for the implementation of the project in conformity with the standards of the ESFERA Project.

The engagement and commitment of CECOHAS staff on humanitarian issues have been determinant in pursuing the objectives provided for in Oxfam Mozambique's Program. With this installed capacity coming from the investment made by Oxfam, CECOHAS not only developed institutional terms, but it also reinforced its capacity of mitigation of impacts caused by disasters to **5,087 families (25,435 people)**, through the implementation of risk reduction and community resilience projects and provided humanitarian assistance **2,283 families**, corresponding to **12,198 people** in projects of response to projects of response to emergencies and post-emergences in Quelimane, Namacurra and Nicoadala Districts.

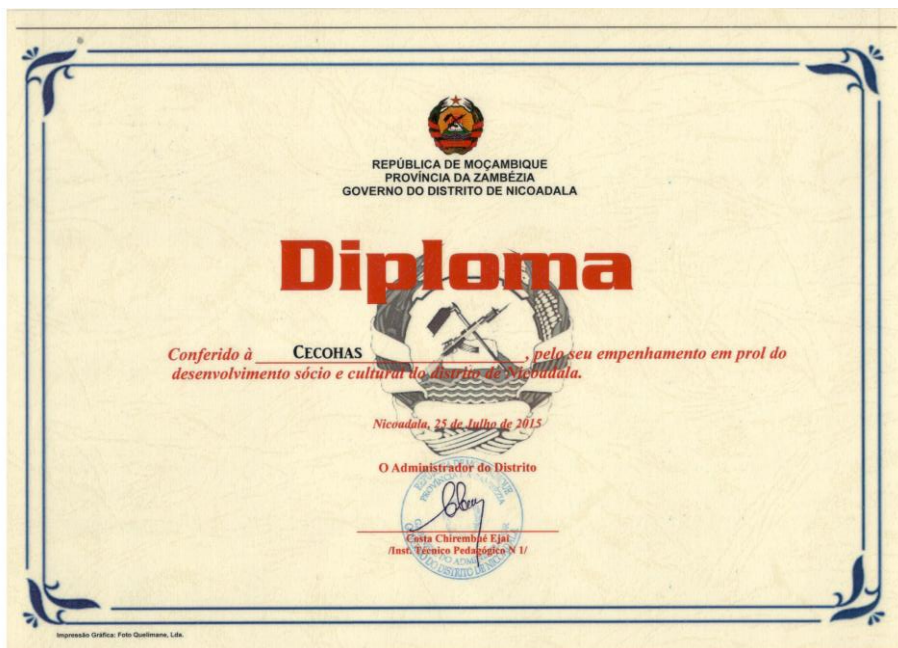
CECOHAS is a member of the humanitarian forum recently established with Oxfam Novib's technical and financial support, fruit of its involvement and active participation, which granted it the statutes of **Focal Point** of the forum at the level of the country's central level.

RESULTS

As a result of the actions carried out, the communities/families assisted by CECOHAS have guaranteed access to safe water and adequate sanitation services and they have improved their hygiene standards. The communities/families abandoned the practices of open sky defecation due to construction of latrines and hygiene promotion activities with immediate impact in the reduction of cases of cholera and waterborne diseases. Women and children improved their participation in economic activities, decision-making forums of community life and school activities due to the reduction of the distances in access to water and they diversified their livelihoods. It is also reported at the community level the reduction of diseases such as diarrhea and malaria as a result of awareness campaigns on good hygiene practices and sanitation, proper hand washing, use of mosquito nets and general cleaning of public spaces. In general, the beneficiary communities of the project interventions improved the individual and collective standards of hygiene and sanitation.

Also as a result of the project, CECOHAS increased its intervention capacity, in terms of size (geographical scope) going from a coverage radius of one (1) community (Incídua community) to 3 districts and its contribution in other districts not covered by their projects during emergencies; it improved its strength and financial and administrative management.

As a corollary to strengthen their humanitarian capacities in 2015 emergency, CECOHAS received a **Diploma of Merit** awarded by the Government of Nicoadala District, and recognition by the Zambézia Provincial Government where it is invited to participate in planning processes.



LESSONS LEARNED

- The Mozambican civil society organizations have much capacity for Community intervention towards their insertion and presence on site and they are an integral part of the people directly affected by the disaster.
- The valorization of local knowledge is a starting point for strengthening the existing local capacities and a recognition that the communities have already their protection mechanisms but which need to be improved in some cases, encouraging community participation in project actions.
- The integration of the staff of the civil society organizations in the missions of response to emergencies, led by international agencies and the United Nations stimulates appetite and promotes mutual learning.
- The joint coordination and planning actions within the civil society organizations encourage and foster the spirit of sharing and complementarities, as well as provide facilities for fundraising.

STORIES

“My name is Carlos Dinis, I worked for CECOHAS for over five years during which I worked as Office Assistant; with the coming of the institutional strengthening project of CECOHAS, in partnership with Oxfam Novib, I was involved in capacity building in the WASH area within the emergency context. I also benefited from the opportunity to participate in practical works of water pumps assembly with the assistance and technical supervision of the specialists of Oxfam team and my colleagues.

I am very happy to be part of this great team work in CECOHAS because besides having gained professional skills, I have also got a family. Today I have technical skills to conduct the activity of rehabilitating water source and building latrines. I am a reference for the organization and I have served as a support member to other colleagues arriving in the organization and I also provide support to the work of CECOHAS’s other partners.”



1. During capacity -building. From right to left: Bastista (Cecohas), Carlos (Cecohas), Juan (Oxfam) and Junqueiro (Cecohas).



2. Carlos (Cecohas) on the right, maintaining a water fountain.

MOCUBA, THE SECOND LIFE AFTER THE FLOOD

Heavy rains in several of the northern districts of the province, together, contributed overwhelmingly to increase the volume of water that ran for Lugela and Licungo rivers. And it is in Mocuba city, located in the center of Zambezia Province, where these two rivers meet "and embrace" where the damage took shape, size and weight, overflowed upon reaching 12 meters high, six meters above the maximum warning level, dragging thousands of homes and destroying several agricultural parcels, causing the collapse of bridges over those rivers Licungo and Lugela (in Mugeba region), fundamental for the connection by land, of the northern and central regions in Mozambique.

Overall, more than 62 thousand hectares of various crops were affected in Zambezia province, of which 35,000 are given as lost in this first season following the damage caused by the flood. In Mopeia district 1,500 hectares were affected, and 3,000 hectares in Morrumbala, 4,000 hectares in Nicoadala, 1,800 hectares in Mocuba, 8,000 hectares in Maganja da Costa and 1,000 hectares Namacurra.

At the moment the province of Zambezia is the most affected. The floods affected about 120 thousand people, or 24,000 families: 64 people died due to floods, lightning and home landslides, and more than 50,000 need some shelter. 15 thousand displaced families moved to accommodation centers set up in highlands towns.

As part of its participation in the consortium of four NGOs [Concern, Oxfam, Save the Children and CARE International], Oxfam in Mozambique in partnership with CECOHAS - (Coordination Center of NGOs for Hygiene, Water and Sanitation) based in the city of Quelimane, Zambezia Province, ensured required capacity of effective response within 72 hours after declaration of the institutional red alert, as well as allocation of resources and systems available locally. Interventions targeted at the level of Mocuba District, basically consisted in the distribution of shelter kits, individual and family hygiene kits, construction of collective latrines, useful tools for household and cleaning, drinking water supply through tanks, mobilization and awareness on hygiene and sanitation as a way to influence health behavior and promotion of changes at the level of the Cajual Accommodation Centre.

COSACA - Consortium of four NGOs Concern, Oxfam, Save the Children and CARE International, aims, together with the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs),

Carlos Martins, during the rehabilitation of a water source in Namacurra District



During a tour of an Oxfam team to the project, visibly happy with the achieved results



the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGC) and partners of the district government, to ensure that the necessary capacity, resources and systems are available locally to bring in and / or coordinate an effective response within 72 hours of a declared emergency in Mozambique through:

1. Mitigation and Prevention;
2. Preparedness and Response;
3. Rapid, sustainable recovery;

STORY: ACIANTE CEBOLA M'RUELA

Aciante Cebola M'ruela, 63 years old, widow - describes in detail the drama lived on the fateful night that turned into flood, the Lugela neighborhood where she lives with her three granddaughters: "The water caught us in the midnight, we fled leaving all our stuff behind. The water took our three doors and zinc plates, left nothing." Better than no one she knows what it is in life to have to start all over again.



"We took refuge inside the church," referring to the Adventist Church of the 7th Day-Jordan, in the city of Mocuba, "We were there for 16 days before moving here (to the center)." The Cajual accommodation center, located in the Cajual neighborhood.

Aciante turns over on the mat on which she is sitting and smiles. We seek to know the reason of the smile, and she says cheerfully: "I am not only complaining, I have to thank because we came here with nothing and the support we received from CECOHAS helped a lot [Refers to the shelter kits, personal and family hygiene kits], because I and my granddaughters continue to keep ourselves clean." The distribution of kits occurs simultaneously with the awareness and mobilization for basic behaviors that contribute to improved health.

The design of the camps and the location of toilets [male and female] are a contributing factor to reduce gender violence. "The toilets are not far from where we sleep. We are not afraid to go there at night. My granddaughters do not fear being raped. It helps us, to be closer to the toilets." Aciantes' explanation shows that many of the women living in the camps fear gender violence, rape and other sexual abuse.

The hygiene and personal dignity are a major challenge for women and young girls, especially teenagers. In Cajual accommodation Center, Aciante confessed, "we lost everything during the floods and we do not know how to deal with women problems." Women and girls share sanitary products, which seriously compromises their health and dignity.

STORY 2: HERCULANO SORTE

A few minutes were enough for the Licungo river flow rise without notice and drag everything in its path. It was the second time that the waters stripped the household goods of Herculano Sorte, 69 years old, married and father of 4 children, 1 boy and 3 girls.

The floods that transformed Mocuba District in a disaster zone, flattening homes, bridges, electricity network, crops and dead bodies, are unprecedented in the province. Sorte says, "Nothing like this was seen since the floods of 71, I swear, by my grandfathers' soul." He refers to the floods of 1971, which also had an enormous destructive force and displaced thousands of people.

"The water filled the whole house, we had to flee to 16 de Junho Primary School without taking almost nothing, only the clothes we had worn" he sighs and looks at the sky, perhaps in search of a solution. By the way, definitive solution that seems delayed to arrive. "Now I do not know what will become of my children, for the school is too far, I would not want to see them lose the year by not attending school."

For Sorte, the process to get back to normal, involves access to a safe place to start, food supply and replacement of agricultural inputs to launch in agricultural production. "For the first time in my life I don't have a hoe, even a machete we have to share because they have provided only one to build the toilet." He refers to the instruments provided to build the household latrines, something important: "The latrines make the difference, because we do not do our hygienic necessities in the open, we thank for this idea of helping us."

Our conversation is interrupted because Herculano Sorte went to greet a man, who he later said to be part of the Management Committee of Health and Sanitation, composed of 16 members, trained by CECOHAS and Oxfam in Cajual accommodation center for mobilization for the proper use of latrines, cleaning the common and individual spaces. "They have helped us a lot in our health, here there has never been deaths. The effort is theirs too. They decided to separate the toilets, men and women, otherwise horrible and strange things would happen"[Laughs].

The creation and training of Management Committee of Hygiene and Sanitation activists by Oxfam in partnership with CECOHAS aims to contribute to behavior change relating to hygiene, to reduce morbidity and mortality resulting from poor sanitation.

Herculano Sorte, addresses the conditions of the tents installed in Cajual accommodation center, and excited says "The tent is not better than my house that the floods took away, but it is safer than in 16 de Junho Secondary School, where we were for two weeks and four days." With an unwavering faith he hopes to be assigned a new plot of land to build his new home.

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