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Food Security in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Newsletter for ECHO/DIPECHO DRR Food Security Partners

Mainstreaming HIV and Gender in ECHO DRR Food Security Projects

Southern Africa remains at the epicentre of the global HIV epidemic. UNAIDS estimates that 35% of all HIV infected people live in this region and the majority are women. Although there is evidence of the epidemic stabilizing in some countries, HIV remains a challenge to livelihoods and development.

As part of the ECHO FS DRR project, FAO REOSA has engaged a Regional HIV and Gender Officer, Gertrude Kara, to support FAO country project coordinators and implementing partners in the three project countries to effectively apply a gender sensitive HIV lens to DRR food security programming. This includes mainstreaming actions to address the needs of vulnerable groups in project design and implementation without stigmatising them. Her tasks include:

- Identifying and training on technical support needs
- Documentation of lessons learned on gender and HIV in DRR food security
- Dissemination and fundraising for new models

Gertrude is visiting Malawi (20 to 25 March) and Mozambique (11 to 15 April) and later Madagascar to understand ECHO Food Security Project operations at field level, consult with FAO and partners, identify support needs and explore partnerships. Results of her mission will contribute to development of a plan of action for mainstreaming HIV, gender and nutrition in this and other REOSA projects. Contact: Gertrude.Kara@fao.org

ECHO FS/DRR projects help strengthen the resilience of vulnerable households' livelihoods and contain and limit the impact of HV and AIDS in emergency settings

Flood and Cyclone Update

Preliminary assessments have noted that three regions in the south-east of **Madagascar,** were badly affected by cyclone Bingiza, with up to 85% of crops flooded. In the ICCO/SAF project areas, early indications are that the project-introduced yam crops have fared well despite the extensive flooding. Three districts in the north-east region recorded minor damage mainly due to strong winds. However the rice crops in the CARE project sites, were assessed as having fared well because of their level of maturity.

Unusual dry spells were reported in most of southern **Malawi** including the ECHO project implementation sites. However the new, locally adapted sorghum and millet crops introduced by the project are weathering the hot and dry conditions particularly well. Localised flooding has also recently occurred in the region outside the project area. In Nsanje 603 households were affected and an estimated 252 ha of crop damaged. In early March, the north of **Malawi** experienced increased rainfall, with crop damage.

The flood alert for the Zambezi region in **Mozambique** was downgraded from red to orange due to reduced rainfall in neighbouring countries. While the ECHO project implementation province of Nampula was not affected, the Ministry of Agriculture reports that 21, 312 ha of crops including maize, rice and legumes were destroyed in Maputo and Gaza.

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Reducing the Risk of Disaster in Flood-prone Southern Malawi

Christian Aid is implementing the ECHO Food Security Disaster Risk project in Chikhwawa, a flood prone district in the south of Malawi. The 12 month project aims to assist the vulnerable population in Chikhwawa to become food secure and to contribute to research that identifies appropriate food security interventions to reduce the risk of disaster in flood prone areas.

Short-cycle seed varieties

Working with government extension officers, civil protection committees and lead farmers, the project has distributed early-maturing seeds for cereals including sorghum, maize and millet to about 3500 households. In the past, these households generally did not produce enough for their needs due to adverse weather and pests. The farmers are currently harvesting maize and sorghum for consumption and storage. This means that the crops have escaped the February-March flood season and the birds which usually attack the crop from mid-March to early April.

Flood Proof Livestock Shelters

Floods also affect livestock -another livelihood source in the district. As a preventative measure, the project has trained farmers to build flood proof goat kraals.

A flood-proof goat shelter, Christian Aid 2011

Seed Multiplication

Another aspect of Christian Aid's activities is seed multiplication. Vulnerable farmers were supplied with different types of seeds and cassava and sweet potatoes cuttings to multiply and at the same time obtain a crop. After multiplication, they will re-distribute cuttings to the rest of the community.

Research

Christian Aid and its partners are conducting research that will recommend options to ensure sustainable livelihoods for flood affected households and communities. The research includes the possibility of adjusting cropping seasons; using irrigation to support the government-subsidized inputs and finding ways of stabilizing goat market prices. The evidence generated will be used to support lobbying and advocacy for specific food security disaster risk reduction approaches and strategies.

For more information contact Sophie Makoloma: SMakoloma@christian-aid.org

A maturing maize crop, Christian Aid, 2011

Do you have a Food Security DRR challenge that you would like partners to assist with? Have you gained experience/ knowledge from your activities or from other sources that would be useful to partners as they implement their activities? Then contact Per Spolander, FAO REOSA, Per.spolander@fao.org

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Sharing Experiences: Working With Communities To Contain Rats

Part of reducing the risk of vulnerability and food insecurity in the ECHO DRR project intervention areas involves securing crops, stored seeds and food from pest attacks. Mozambique and Madagascar experienced rat invasions, and levied different responses.

Damage done to a rice field by rats, FAO 1997

Following the onset of the rainy season in Mozambique, rats affected the newly planted crops, especially cereals and legumes in Ihla de Mozambique, Mogincual, and Mossuril areas. The National Agricultural Research Institute suggested a chemical rodenticide. But because rat meat is consumed by many Mozambicans, there were concerns with the effects of this toxic product. The danger is that the rat does not ingest sufficient amounts of poison to kill it – because of the bitter, repelling taste – and is then consumed by humans. To avoid this threat Oikos and FAO experimented with the Cage Rat Trap and successfully contained the rats.

The traps are particularly useful to capture rats that affect storage facilities and homes. However, in order to keep the rats from returning, sealing of huts and storage facilities is required. In addition, in the case of large scale infestation, the logistics of setting traps and disposal of live rats can pose a challenge.

In Madagascar, rats were noted in rice fields in Fénérive Est in the Atsinanana region from late 2010. The decided course of action, resulting from close collaboration between CARE International, FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture Plant Protection Services was to use rodenticide. To limit the associated risks, all farmers in the community were offered training on responsible handling and use of rodenticide, as well as on emergency first aid required in case of accidental human poisoning.

Rat cage trap, FAO /OIKOS 2011

For more information on rodent control and community safety training contact Dr. Yogendra Singh, yogendra.singh@fao.org or Hanitra Randrianarivelo, hanitra.randrianarivelo@fao.org. Click here to read the full article on the Disaster Risk Reduction Southern Africa website.

Sharing Knowledge: Solar Dryers

Food processing can be an effective way to generate income for vulnerable households. You can learn a lot on Solar Dryers by logging into FAOs AGRIS website (http://agris.fao.org), The International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology and search for “solar dryer”. You will get 223 results on a wide range of issues including how to build dryers, portable dryers, performance of dryers, modular dryers, among others. Below is a selection of four articles/studies on a Local Tunnel Solar Drier from India, and fish and meat drying.

Success story of Local Tunnel Solar Drier for small scale Entrepreneurship in Rural India

An improved solar dryer for fish drying in the coastal belt

Meat processing technology for small- to medium-scale producers

Dryer construction to produce solar-dried fruit and vegetables for micro-and small scale rural enterprise development

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FS/DRR Project Setup: The Collaborative Relationship between FAO and NGO Partners

The ECHO funded innovative FS DRR activities in the three countries are implemented by COOPI, GOAL Malawi, Christian Aid/Evangelical Association of Malawi, OIKOS, CARE and ICCO. The implementing partners, through their regular contact with the communities are the main source of project information.

FAO has a twofold role in the project, centered on coordination and the provision of technical assistance. These roles are filled nationally by FAO Country Emergency Coordination Units (ERCUs) and regionally by FAO's regional office (REOSA).

The ERCUs are an important coordination channel to connect implementing partners with food security and DRR stakeholders, to facilitate important linkages among implementing partners and REOSA, as well as provide technical support.

REOSA coordinates the collaborative development of tools, methodologies to facilitate the collection of comparable data in all project countries and effective exchange of information with all stakeholders through the production of publications and a website. This exchange of information will lead to publications and the FS/DRR advocacy strategy for the region.

To date, FAO has assisted implementing partners to:
Train on: Seed production techniques (Madagascar); rice seed plot purification (Madagascar); rodent and pest control (Madagascar, Mozambique); harvest and post-harvest techniques, including QDS, rice seed nurseries, multiplication plots, drying, threshing, winnowing, sorting, seed treatment, conditioning and bagging, storage, emergency first aid for accidental poisoning (Madagascar); yams – crop sensitization, seed and land preparation techniques, transplanting and maintenance techniques (Madagascar); conservation agriculture techniques (Mozambique), seed multiplication (Malawi and Madagascar); soil fertility and erosion management, land degradation mitigation; water harvesting and organic manure production (Mozambique).

Technically assist to: identify, procure and distribute appropriate seed varieties (establish demonstration and multiplication plots (Mozambique and Madagascar); establish farmer field schools; participatory techniques development (Mozambique); develop and implement M&E tools and analysis.
Coordinate: regular partners' meetings at national level, and a regional meeting in November 2010; promote the project to stakeholders.

Country Updates

Following cyclone Bingiza in **Madagascar** ICCO and FAO Madagascar are currently engaged in efforts to limit the impact of localized insect attacks. A participatory ECHO partners' workshop is planned in Madagascar at the end of March to assess the ECHO project's implementation to date and to make plans for an assessment of the project areas' experiences with the cyclone.

In the February-March period, FAO in **Malawi** trained 286 farmers, 49% of them women, in seed multiplication in Nsanje, and 178 farmers in livestock management in Chikhwawa. This period also saw the launch of the DRR Centre in Lilongwe, as part of the DIPECHO project. It will serve as information sharing platform and will raise the DRM profile in the country. The ECHO partners in Malawi also hosted a monitoring visit from the project donor and visited the implementation sites.

This month has seen Oikos and FAO **Mozambique** collaborating on the training of 20 extension agents on dry/winter season crops. FAO has issued a tender for the procurement of dry season crops, including tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, green pepper, to ensure the timely provision of inputs to the beneficiaries. Mozambique will this month host the donor ECHO, for a monitoring mission.

Upcoming Meetings

Country project partners hold regular coordination meetings. Contact the Country ECHO FS Project Coordinators (FAO) for dates and details:

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