

## Supporting communities affected by drought in Vietnam

Final report: August 2016 – July 2017

### Progress against objectives

With the Isle of Man Government's support we have provided emergency relief to 3,500 people from ethnic minority groups affected by drought in some of the poorest areas of Lam Dong province and Dak Lak province in Vietnam. We have enhanced their resilience to future disasters through the provision of materials and knowledge to empower them to better cope with the negative impact of drought and other extreme weather conditions. We are delighted to share with you the results of your project that has exceeded many of its original targets.

#### Key project successes

- 100 of the poorest households received 100 plastic containers to store clean water for use during the drought season and keep agricultural products safe during floods to minimise post-harvest losses.
- 2 water supply systems were installed to promote access to safe water for 142 households.
- 418 of the poorest households received 12,748 kg of rice seeds and 2,569 kg of corn seeds, 3 breeding cows and bulls and 2 breeding pigs, helping to improve their food security.
- 476 people attended training that has equipped them with knowledge and skills on climate change and climate resilient sustainable agriculture to enhance the resilience and diversity of farmers and to help them to adapt to extreme weather conditions.

### Project activities

#### **Activity 1.1 Provide 100 water containers to store safe water during the drought season**

We have supplied 100 water containers to 100 of the poorest households in the project target area, enabling approximately 500 people to store clean water that can then be used during the drought season. The water containers are made from high quality plastic with a volume of 2,000 litres and are covered by a guarantee of 8-10 years to ensure the families can use them for years to come. The containers can be used for a range of purposes, such as storing water for use in drought season and also storing seeds, rice and corn during the flood season.

Feedback from our local partner, Supporting Programme for Development (SPD), and local community members highlighted that the water containers were of good quality and are enabling the safe preservation of clean water and food. Crucially, they were provided at an optimum time at the beginning of the rainy season, which allowed the households to store water before the dry season hits.

#### **Activity 1.2 Provide households with access to wells and a piped water system in Krong Bong district**

Following an onsite assessment led by ActionAid and SPD, it was clear that there was an urgent need to build two piped water system in the intervention areas, rather than just the one proposed. Due to support from the local communities, local authorities and our local partner, combined with low market prices of materials, we successfully managed to build and install two water systems – one in Hoa Phong and one in Dang Kang commune of Krong Bong district. Through this we exceeded our target of reaching 42 households, as the water system in Hoa Phong benefits 42 poor households, equivalent to 210 community members and the one in Dang Kang 100 households, equivalent to 500 community members. Households were selected by thorough analysis of data available from the local authorities and prioritising those families that have people living with disabilities, those that were women headed and those living in the most severe poverty.

The installation of the water systems were a true community led effort, with local people involved and actively engaged in all stages, including; meetings and discussions, field assessments to find suitable locations, participating in two Water User Groups, establishing rules and regulations and operation and maintenance plans. Finding the right locations to drill and install piped water systems was particularly challenging as the area is very prone to drought. However, local knowledge from the community members enabled us to quickly find water – this helped make considerable savings which contributed to enabling us to build two systems instead of one. As the community felt this project really addressed crucial issues they were facing, they happily provided labour and two landowners at the chosen locations voluntarily contributed their land for the instalment of the two systems. Each of the two Water User Groups are made up of the village leader, village deputy leader and representatives of each household in the village – with women particularly encouraged to take a leading role in the groups. Within the Water User Groups, it was agreed community members would cover the operation and maintenance costs of the systems in the future.

During previous dry seasons, local people had to travel long distances of up to 2.5 km to collect water as all wells in the area were dried up. Now water is much more accessible, with local people having to travel no further than 500 metres to collect fresh, safe water. In addition men are now collecting water as well, which is partly helping to relieve the burden that used to lie solely on women, contributing to gender equality.

### **Activity 1.3 Support 250 households to recover from the drought by providing seeds and livestock to rebuild their livelihoods**

A total of 418 households were provided with seeds and livestock to help rebuild their livelihoods and recover from the losses caused by severe droughts. We far exceeded our target of reaching 250 households by providing slightly less seeds but to more beneficiaries and adopting a rotation system for the animals, so that more local people could benefit. Seeds and livestock provided include:

- 8,930 kg of rice seeds to 155 households, 1,145 kg of maize seeds to 158 households, two breeding bulls to two households, one breeding cow to one household and two breeding pigs to two households in Krong Bong district, reaching a total of 318 households.
- 3,818 kg of rice seeds to 27 households and 1,424 kg of maize seeds to 73 households in Lam Ha district, reaching a total of 100 households.

Based on local knowledge and experience, together with technical officials, all the seeds and animals were carefully selected to ensure the highest quality. For instance, the bulls are the Brahman breed, which is 2-3 times bigger than the local breed, can grow fast and have strong disease resistance. Together with the local Agriculture Extension Stations and Veterinary Stations, we quickly provided the seeds and livestock. This prompt provision was important as it allowed local people to use the seeds for the 2017 summer-autumn cropping season.

Guidelines on how to manage the animals and seeds provided were developed. These include: regular reporting back to other community members and local authority on the animals' health and rotation of the animals to other households once they have produced their first offspring. This offers the chance for more local people to benefit and to bring about a bigger difference in the target communities in the long-term.

### **Activity 1.4 Build skills and awareness in disaster resilient farming methods and budget allocations for local disaster risk reduction**

A total of 15 training sessions, instead of the 10 originally proposed, were organised to enhance the local people's knowledge about sustainable livelihoods and ways to adapt farming methods to cope with disasters. A total of 476 people have been reached, instead of the 150 originally proposed. This was possible due to facilitators coming to the villages to conduct trainings, rather than community members travelling to a training location, thus reducing travel and accommodation costs. Women were encouraged to attend the training by carefully choosing times and locations that suited them. As a result, women made up around 70% of participants for the sessions. These trainings supported

the local people to obtain the best results from the seeds and breeds and helped them to better cope with disasters and climate change. They also provided information on how local budgets were allocated and spent in relation to disaster risk reduction, disaster planning and emergency responses. This enabled the local community to give feedback to the local government on the effectiveness of these budget allocations. Participants were encouraged to share what they have learnt to their respective communities to reach more people.

### **Activity 1.5 Support the community to develop Disaster Risk Reduction Plans for their villages**

ActionAid facilitated and supported communities to develop five Disaster Risk Reduction Plans – allowing them to have a space to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the trainings and put this into practice. By the end of the sessions:

- Risks related to natural disasters were identified by local communities;
- Solutions to mitigate the risks and cope with negative impacts of disasters were proposed, such as establishing a rescue team at village level.
- Five clear action plans for five target communes which outline required resources, roles and responsibilities and coordination in the event of an emergency happening were developed.

### **Collaboration and Co-ordination**

During the project, all parties worked well together to achieve the best possible outcome for the project. This included:

- Local authorities – the project received strong support and engagement of the local authorities at all province, district, and commune levels. Authorisation for the project was made promptly and was greatly received. The project also received the much needed support from local government agencies such as Agriculture Extension Stations and Veterinary Stations.
- Local partners – the SPD team worked closely with local authorities and local communities to implement and monitor the project's activities.
- Local communities – their enthusiastic participation in all activities and all stages of the project ensured its success and sustainability.

### **Successes and challenges**

Local communities and authorities have both proactively participated in intervention design, implementation and monitoring which resulted in a very successful project. Furthermore, the project also contributed to changing the mind-set and working attitude of local authorities. This project has encouraged local authorities to change their attitudes from 'managing' to 'serving' the communities. The local authorities are now more aware of the rights of the local people to live in a safe, food secure environment.

It was very difficult to choose the right locations to drill and install the piped water systems in the project areas. The project team asked for local and traditional knowledge of the local people and together we were able to overcome this difficulty, finding water quickly which resulted in significant savings. A flood in Hoa Phong commune damaged the crops of around 30 households. This was unexpected as Hoa Phong commune had never experienced a flood before. ActionAid is working with affected households through our long-term development programmes which are supporting them with re-sowing.

## Impact

The project has exceeded many of our original expectations thanks to the support and coordination between all parties involved and savings made. Total beneficiary numbers are shown in the table below:

Beneficiaries	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total
Direct	1,250	1,000	700	550	<b>3,500</b>
Indirect (including local authorities, civil society organisations and other local communities)	16,000	14,000	11,000	9,000	<b>50,000</b>

Through improved knowledge and understanding of climate change issues, local communities have become more independent and have gained the confidence to voice their needs and constraints, develop their own solutions to challenges they face and hold duty bearers accountable. The project has involved and encouraged the participation of at least 3,500 people in analysing problems and planning their own solutions to implement sustainable agricultural initiatives.

Women were particularly encouraged to participate to ensure the activities took their needs into consideration. Women were the first to be introduced and trained on climate change, Disaster Risk Reduction and agricultural production and encouraged to represent their households to receive seeds and breeds, making decisions on how and when to use them in the most efficient way for their families.

## Sustainability

By empowering community members, we have encouraged a long-term change. As well as including them in all stages of the project and arming them with relevant knowledge, the establishment of structures, such as the Water User Groups ensure there is a formal way for them to continue taking control. Water User Groups, local communities as well as local authorities have committed to maintain the piped water systems; including covering the maintenance costs in the long-term.

With the knowledge and skills they have received on topics such as farming and raising livestock, and disaster risk reduction and climate change, community members have the chance for more productive and sustainable livelihoods and a better understanding of a phenomenon that has been severely affecting their daily life. They now have the tools to cope with this. Local communities were encouraged to express their opinions on local Disaster Risk Reduction Plans, which had previously been developed by local authorities without consultation from local communities, which has increased the relevance and effectiveness of the plans. More importantly, this has empowered local people, enabling them to participate more in the decision-making process, promoting the development of civil society and pressing for more accountability and transparency of local authorities.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The project implementation and management was closely followed by ActionAid's Monitoring and Evaluation system, ensuring accountability and transparency. There are sources of verification for all activities: records, training assessments, meeting minutes, etc. At the end of the project, an Internal Final Evaluation was conducted by the ActionAid team to highlight things to work on and

things we did very well. We will continue to monitor the impact of the project, focussing especially on the piped water systems and harvests. Community members can still use rainwater and so the piped water systems have yet to operate at their full capacity. The upcoming dry season will result in the local people needing to use the water systems more, which we will monitor and where necessary provide any support required. The seeds and breeds were used for this summer-autumn cropping season (starting from May 2017) so we need to wait until the harvest in order to evaluate more clearly the impact on the food security of local communities.

### **Financial**

The project spent 99.2% of the budget; with a total spend of £49,605. We would like to spend the remaining amount of £395 on purchasing an additional breeding cow for the community. Please find detailed financials below:

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Expenditure £</b>
1.1. Provide 100 water containers to store safe water during drought season	10,742	10,510
1.2. Install pipe water systems for poorest minority ethnic households	5,450	5,558
1.3 Support livelihood inputs (seeds and domestic animals) to recover from the drought impact for 300 households	21,808	21,691
1.4 Capacity building for targeted communities on topics such as techniques for best use of livelihood inputs to adapt with negative impacts of disaster and budget analysis on DRR	8,000	8,103
1.5 Support and mobilise community to use the trained knowledge and tools for developing community's DRR plan	3,000	2,711
Final evaluation (internal)	1,000	1,032
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>49,605</b>

**Thank you for your continued support**