



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 15 November 2016

Launch of Report: Hope Dries Up? Women and Girls Coping with Drought and Climate Change

CARE study finds evidence of harmful coping strategies in Mozambique: girls as young as 11 have to engage in survival sex for food

Maputo, 15th November 2016. Women and girls in Mozambique are struggling more than ever to cope with the current drought, the worst in 35 years, aggravated by a particularly powerful El Niño phenomenon, according to a new CARE study. Researchers have talked to 75 people in the region of Inhambane to get first-hand impressions of what the situation is like in areas affected by drought and hunger. According to CARE's assessment, younger girls and adolescents are pulled out of school to help their parents fetch water.

Up to 80 percent of the families are forced to reduce their meals to only one or two daily rations. Tens of thousands of children are expected to be acutely malnourished. The situation is particularly hard for teenage girls who lack the experience and knowledge to come up with strategies to protect themselves and their children from hunger. The CARE study also shows that those communities who participated in programs introducing new cultivation practices, better seeds and alternative income activities were far better prepared to manage lean months than those without knowledge.

Marc Nosbach, Country Director of CARE Mozambique, said:

"We are the second year into this drought in the South of the country and the situation of women and girls is becoming more and more destitute. They are now spending up to six hours per day in search of water, three times as much as prior to the drought."

"The sheer desperation to provide for their families causes some women to resort to survival sex or other forms of exploitative behavior in return for money and food. CARE's research also suggests an increase in child marriage, with families aiming to reduce the number of dependents in the family or cover expenses through the payment of a bride price. Ever since food has become painfully scarce in Mozambique, many girls are increasingly exposed to sexual and gender-based violence. During our research we found that girls as young as 11 or 12 years have been lured away from water collection points by older men in exchange for food stocks or money. Some of the girls discovered later that they are pregnant and are consequently stigmatized by the community and family."

"We know that adaptation to climate change and droughts is our most effective tool to combat the severe effects. CARE urges the international community and decision-makers at the UN Climate Change Conference currently happening in Morocco to ensure sufficient funding for adaption and resilience programs. Otherwise, hard-won developmental gains will continue to unravel and recovery will be costly and take decades."

Link to report:

<http://careclimatechange.org/publications/hope-dries-women-girls-coping-drought-climate-change/>

Photos:

Photos used in the report have been uploaded [here](#); further photos from Mozambique are on [CARE*Images](#).

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