

Project Brief

Enhancing Community Resilience and Sustainability

OVERVIEW

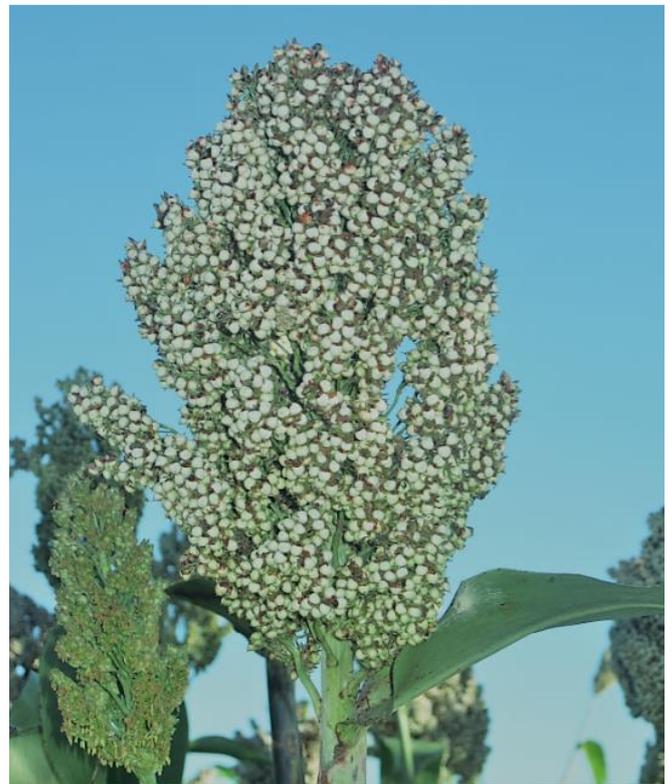
CARE in partnership with PLAN and ICRISAT are implementing a 3 year Enhancing Community Resilience and Sustainability (ECRAS) project in Chiredzi and Mwenezi districts of Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The project is funded by UNDP, European Union, DFID and Swedish Corporation. The project has been running from July 2016 and is expected to end in June 2019. By the end of the project, households and communities in the two districts will have increased capacity to access assets, opportunities and wider choices to improve their wellbeing and withstand shocks and stresses in a favourable enabling environment. One of the project's strategies is to empower the most vulnerable people, including women and marginalized groups, to secure their livelihoods, claim their rights and fulfill their aspirations. Women in Chiredzi and Mwenezi are being empowered through financial inclusion and market viability options such as Village Savings and Lending, input and output market linkages in crop and livestock value chains.

What we Know

Resilience is defined as the capacity of an individual, household, population group or system to anticipate, absorb, and recover from shocks and stress, hazards and/or effects of climate change. **Sustainability** is the ability to uphold, self-support and to be able to maintain. The project therefore seeks to ensure a state of resilience amongst communities and for the same communities to become sustainably resilient. If the capacities and assets to deal with various shocks, stresses, uncertainty and change are built & supported, and if drivers of risk are reduced, and if these actions are supported by an enabling environment, then Resilience is increased.

What we are doing

ECRAS targets all members of the communities without any discrimination, but with a specific focus on ensuring 50% of the participants are women. Women with husbands working in South Africa and the youth are encouraged to participate in all of the project interventions so that they are also protected from shocks. Model Households will pilot and demonstrate selected resilient approaches with 2 Model households per village (25% of these will be female headed households and 20% will be youth headed households). Resilience based research is a cornerstone approach of the project and participants contribute towards inputs as there are no free handouts. Households can build resilience through investment in their children's education, and will benefit later on as the children start working and ploughing back into their homesteads, living a separate life without burdening their parents and thus a multiplier effect. In addition, CARE connects communities with marketing opportunities for everything farmers produce for example SIDella has been engaged for sesame and cow pea, the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) for sorghum, pearl millet, ground nut, as well as value addition for local markets. ECRAS seeks to empower farmers through this kind of market participation, where farmers can negotiate their own prices and be effective players in the market.



Outcome 1: Household and community capacities and assets built to deal with economic and climate related shocks and stresses

- Prioritises community based planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for early warning and Disaster Risk Reduction.

Outcome 2: Economic and climate related drivers of risk reduced in targeted communities

It focuses on;

- improving access to productive infrastructure
- improving the efficiency of sustainable, climate smart and nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and community based natural resource management
- Framed by a business-model approach linked to value chains and financial services.

- Technological innovation will harness both scientific research and indigenous knowledge systems to model the most appropriate technologies for each environment

Outcome 3: Leaders and service providers improved in creation of an enabling environment for resilient livelihoods

- Works to develop an enabling environment that addresses the needs of the targeted communities including women, youth and minorities through the establishment of responsive and inclusive governance systems

Project Activities

The following are some of the selected major activities;

- Establishing/revival of Disaster Risk Reduction structures
 - Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment i.e. identification of risks, hazards, disasters, vulnerability and capacities
 - Development of Community Adaptation Action Plans
- Establishing Social Safety Nets-
 - New and revived Village Savings and Lending (VS&L) groups and piloting of innovative social safety net approaches (grain banks, promoting micro-insurance)
- Participatory Scenario Planning
 - PSP information will enable the farmers to manage risks caused by climate change
 - Important for farmers to use climate information, based on forecasted scenarios, in planning for the farming season. Critical for farmers' adaptation to climate change.
 - PSP fuses indigenous forecast and the scientific forecast to produce a hybrid forecast
 - PSP information allows development of a set of advisories for the coming season and these are shared with farmers through government extension staff

- Promotion of Livestock minimum thresholds i.e
 - 5 cow weaner system,
 - 10 doe goat system and
 - 20 hen system,
 - Herd rationalisation to ensure that only productive stock is kept with the unproductive stock being fattened and sold
 - Fish farming linked to the market
- Improved crop, livestock and agro-forestry production
 - Advising communities on contextual climate smart agriculture approaches.
 - Fodder production e.g. velvet bean, forage sorghum
 - Cash crops such as sesame and sugar beans
 - Promotion of resilient crops (drought tolerant, short season and high yielding) e.g. Millet and sorghum
 - Diversified crop production, cash cropping and nutritious crops production for household income and food security and resilience building.
 - Trainings (farmer field schools, post-harvest technologies)
- Private Public-sector Partnership linkages- finance, off takers.
 - Conducting value chain assessments
 - Linkages of input and output market and service providers with communities
 - Linking communities with financial institutions
- Promoting and piloting innovative viable productive water technologies in demonstration areas, the need to harvest and preserve enough grass/fodder and water for use during the dry season
- Holistic Land and Livestock management
 - enhancing skills to conserve biodiversity and rangeland resources
 - restoration of grazing lands safeguards livestock against poverty deaths