Australian Aid

RESEARCH FINDINGS

BEST APPROACHES FROM DISASTER READY PROJECT TO BE REPLICATED AT SCALE BY GOVERNMENT AND/OR OTHER PARTNERS

Timor-Leste
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CONSULTANT: MATILDE COELHO DA SILVA

AHP Disaster READY

Executive Summary

This study aims to analyze best practices in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) activities, particularly from the Disaster READY Project phase II (DRP II) across all five AHP agencies, in order to determine which approaches have the potential to be replicated at scale by the government and partners in Timor-Leste, especially those that ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. The research collected inputs from target groups at both community and national level, including local authorities, Civil Protection municipal and national staff, vulnerable communities, AHP Agencies and local implementing partners across project target areas. The research question looked into effectiveness, inclusiveness and localization of project implementation success and potential for scalability.

Community Action Planning (CAP), Small Scale Disaster Mitigation Activities (SSDRMA), and Participatory Community Risk Assessment (PCRA) emerged as the most successful in terms of planning and implementation. These activities were highly regarded for their **effectiveness** in reducing disaster risk and addressing the needs of target groups. Community engagement, NGO performance, and local authority support were identified as key factors contributing to their success. On the other hand, common challenges to success, which were mentioned across responses, naturally also related to insufficient community participation and engagement, especially most vulnerable community members — mostly due to accessibility and cultural obstacles — whenever they occurred, as hindering activity success. Training effectiveness, and coordinating mechanisms for warning and response were also highlighted, as well as coordination issues with government entities. Despite these challenges, positive changes were observed in community preparedness, climate resilience, and improved communication with local authorities as a result of activities.

Findings show that in order to enhance successful outcomes of these activities, especially considering their potential for scalability, efforts to promote community participation, gender and disability inclusion, and better coordination between agencies and government entities are vital in the process. Resource efficiency was also identified as a fundamental factor for scalability. Activities such as SSDRMA were identified as complying with these criteria during the study. Trainings and developing disaster plans for communities were also mentioned as effective, cost-efficient and scalable non-physical activities since, from past experience, communities have been able to maintain and apply this knowledge, whenever counting on support from local actors.

The research showcases notable progress in ensuring the **inclusion** of vulnerable persons' voices in the mentioned activities, as well as decision-making platforms concerning climate resilience, disaster preparedness, and response at local level. Responses indicate significant improvements in the participation of women, pregnant and lactating mothers and people with disability, in community disaster risk reduction efforts and leadership roles within the community. Despite these advancements, challenges remain, particularly concerning accessibility for lactating mothers and cultural barriers that hinder the full engagement of women. These challenges are being addressed by implementing agencies in DRP II and this learning document offers additional insights to continue doing so. Capacity-building initiatives have played a pivotal role in empowering women and enhancing their knowledge and skills in disaster preparedness and response, leading to increased active engagement in shaping community resilience strategies. Addressing cultural barriers and gender norms remains a crucial aspect in fostering greater gender inclusivity in decision-making processes. Continued promotion of targeted and tailored capacity-building programs for vulnerable groups can further

integrate women's voices into climate resilience and disaster preparedness plans, resulting in more effective and sustainable outcomes. Moreover, addressing accessibility challenges for lactating mothers and people with disabilities is vital to ensure their meaningful participation in disaster risk reduction efforts, particularly regarding facilities and accessibility.

Regarding **localization**, the research highlights progress in enabling local leadership, NGOs, and CSOs to effectively implement inclusive disaster risk reduction at the community level, promoting climate resilience and disaster preparedness. Despite notable achievements, challenges persist, especially related to limited resource allocation and coordinating mechanisms at the government level representing a significant obstacle to localization efforts. Once again, AHP agencies are already looking to mitigate these challenges for DRP II and this research offers further recommendations on the next steps. Nevertheless, there is a growing understanding of responsibilities among local authorities and communities, partially as a result of training and socialization activities. The capacity of local authorities and partners has improved, but respondents emphasize the necessity for continued training and technical support. Communities have shown increased independent response capacity through activities; however, sustained training and support are deemed essential to solidify their knowledge and resilience to disasters and climate change. Addressing coordination issues and fostering community ownership remain crucial for the effective implementation of inclusive disaster risk reduction at the community level.

As such, in terms of **scalability**, and considering all the above-mentioned factors of effectiveness, inclusion and localization, small scale disaster risk mitigation activities, like building bridges and implementing localized early warning systems, were highlighted for their adaptability, as these initiatives aligned with specific needs and geography, demonstrated by customized danger signs for different areas. Active community engagement, deemed essential, can ensure learning and maintenance. Civil Protection Authority informants noted scalability potential in activities like risk warning signs due to low cost and community knowledge capacity. This aligns with findings on effectiveness and cost-effective localization, indicating sustainability through independent community management. Additionally, the study further underscored the scalability potential of targeted trainings and community action planning for their adaptability to local contexts, low cost and maintenance, and inclusiveness of vulnerable groups, particularly women and people with disabilities.

In conclusion, findings show that activities likely to be scaled by the government being project coverage are Community Action Planning (CAP), Small Scale Disaster Risk Mitigation Activities (SSDRMA), and Participatory Community Risk Assessment (PCRA). This is due to their scalability potential, including efficiency of planning and implementation, adaptability to different locations, inclusivity and cost-efficiency. For these activities, however, to be scaled successfully, measures need to be taken in advance to ensure community engagement and ownership, support from local authorities and proper allocation of resources and inclusion of vulnerable groups such as women and people with disabilities from the onset.

Recommendations for AHP agencies are to enhance coordination and localization (advocate for a localized plan and formalized coordinated efforts between all stakeholders at a local level for disaster response); invest in tailored capacity building of vulnerable groups, dissemination of laws and policies; advocate for resource allocation from the government and practice knowledge sharing. Essentially, localized approaches, capacity-building initiatives, and fostering inclusive preparedness and decision-making processes will play a pivotal role in creating a more resilient and prepared communities.

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List of Acronyms

AHP	: Australian Humanitarian Partnership
CAP	: Community Action Planning
CBOs	: Community-Based Organizations
CBDRM	: Community-Based Disaster Risk Management
CP	: Civil Protection
CPA	: Civil Protection Authority
CSOs	: Civil Society Organizations
CVA	: Climate Vulnerability Assessment
CVTL	: Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste
DNMG	: National Directorate of Meteorology and Geophysics
DRM	: Disaster Risk Management
DRP I	: Disaster READY Project Phase 1
DRP II	: Disaster READY Project Phase 2
DRR	: Disaster Risk Reduction
FDGs	: Focus Group Discussions
GBV	: Gender-Based Violence
HH	: Household
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
KIIS	: Key Informant Interviews
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organizations
PCRA	: Participatory Community Risk Assessment
SDMC	: Suco Disaster Management Committee
SOP	: Standard Operating Procedure
SSDRMA	: Small Scale Disaster Risk Mitigation Activities

1. Project Background and introduction

The DRP is a component of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) Program funded by the Australian Government and implemented by Australian NGOs and their local partners. Its main purpose is to *Strengthen local humanitarian capability and preparedness in the Pacific and Timor-Leste so that communities are better able to respond to and recover from rapid and slow-onset disasters.* In Timor-Leste, Phase I of the project was implemented from 2018-2022 by CARE International, Oxfam, Plan International, Caritas, World Vision and their local partners. Phase II is currently under implementation, from July 2022 until the end of 2026.

The Disaster READY phase 1(DRP I) endline Evaluation report revealed important insights regarding the success of activities and approaches, which can inform the potential scalability of DRP II activities. The report highlights significant findings based on the achievements, challenges, and shortcomings of the first phase. Firstly, the project has brought about a notable shift among humanitarian actors, making them consider the needs and capacities of marginalized groups on a broader scale. Secondly, communities' knowledge and preparedness have significantly improved, showing potential for replicating successful approaches on a larger scale. The successful dissemination of early warning alerts to marginalized groups also indicates the possibility of scaling up inclusive communication strategies. The report emphasizes the cost-effectiveness and success of partnerships and coordination at different levels. Moreover, community-led disaster risk reduction efforts have been strengthened, and inclusive practices for women and persons with disabilities have been successfully implemented, providing valuable insights for expanding such approaches to other social groups. These findings offer valuable guidance for shaping the future direction and expansion of disaster risk reduction initiatives, which will be further explored in the findings' section of this report.

DRP Phase II started its implementation period in July 2022, based on the outcomes and targets below. The outcomes defined for DRP I and DRP II are mostly parallel. While DRP I primarily emphasized Outcomes 1 and 3, there was also a minor focus on local CBOs. In contrast, DRP II has evolved to make this emphasis on local Civil society Organizations(CSOs) and community based Organization (CBOs) a standalone outcome, signifying a more concentrated focus on localization and the role played by local CBOs in leading implementation of DRM activities. The following are the key project outcome areas:

Outcome 1: Communities (especially vulnerable groups) plan and implement effective, inclusive and integrated disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities.

Outcome 2: Local civil society actors (NGOs, CBOs, churches, informal groups) have improved institutional and technical capacity to fulfill their role in effective and inclusive disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation.

Outcome 3: National and sub-national governments are supported to lead effective, inclusive, and coordinated disaster preparedness, climate change adaptation and response activities.

Target Groups	DRP I End of Project Reach		DRP II Targets		DRP II Reach (Year 1)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Adult without disability	12,128	10,237	5,791	5,391	2,245	1,690
Child Without Disability	3,831	3,148	4,483	4,310	113	112
Adult with disability	299	204	463	437	89	66
Child with disability	40	37	223	215	1	2
Total	**16,298**	**13,626**	**10,960**	**10,353**	**2,448**	**1,870**

Table 1 DRP I and II Targets and Reach

The baseline study conducted at AHP agencies level in DRP II, assessed the disaster landscape in Timor-Leste and in the project target areas, identifying common disasters faced by communities - including strong winds, droughts, landslides, and floods. It also highlighted the status of disaster management committees, communication with the government, community disaster risk reduction and response plans, household-level activities, early warning information, identification of hazards and risks, child protection issues, and the practices of AHP NGOs. These findings provide valuable insights and underscore the need for strategic interventions to enhance disaster preparedness and resilience in the region.

The findings across all agencies highlight challenges such as the lack of established disaster management committees in new project areas, limited resources hindering community-level activities, communication gaps between different levels of government, and the need for greater gender and social inclusion in disaster risk reduction initiatives. To address these issues, the baseline study offers comprehensive recommendations, including establishing disaster management committees, improving gender and social equity within these committees, supporting the development of disaster risk reduction plans, expanding and diversifying community-level activities, strengthening early warning systems, enhancing community capacity in disaster risk reduction, improving women and people with disability participation in project implementation and fostering better coordination among AHP agencies and their partners. These recommendations aim to bolster the project effectiveness and inclusivity and contribute to building a more resilient and disaster-ready Timor-Leste.

2. Research objective and approach

The main objective of this research is to document best practices in order to understand which DRP activities and/or approaches have the potential to be replicated at scale by governments and partners in Timor-Leste, especially those that ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. In addition, the research aims at identifying the areas for program adaptation and recommendations to AHP agencies on how to improve the current DRP II implementation approach to ensure activities are ready to be scaled up by the Government and other relevant partners.

Information was collected and analyzed by assessing both previous and ongoing project interventions across all five AHP agencies throughout the project areas, at consortium level. The research was primarily based on perspectives and experiences of the community (particularly the most vulnerable groups), CSOs, national and sub-national government entities, implementing agencies and partners. The learning question is formulated as follows:

"Which DRP activities or approaches (that address the specific climate resilience and disaster preparedness capacity needs of vulnerable persons) have the potential, and cost-effectiveness, to be replicated at scale by government and other partners in Timor-Leste?"

The learning question will consequently relate to all of the DRP's outcomes, which will in turn be addressed through the cross-cutting factors of **Effectiveness**, **Inclusion**, **Localization** and **Scalability** to determine their success.

The following section provides a breakdown of the four factors used to evaluate activities — effectiveness, inclusiveness, localization, and scalability— each accompanied by sub-factors that clarify their meanings. These sub-factors, in turn, serve as a qualitative measure during the data collection process, outlining the particular attributes or qualities that are being sought in activities to determine how well they align with the corresponding main factor. It's important to note that not all activities need to encompass every sub-factor to be considered successful. Instead, these sub-factors offer a nuanced comprehension and qualitative assessment of the activities. These themes emerged during the broader initial research and were individually explored to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. They are integrated into the research's learning inquiries and questionnaires, as detailed in the analysis framework table provided below:

1. Effectiveness: refers to the extent to which strategies, measures, and actions taken to reduce the impacts of disasters are successful in achieving their intended goals and objectives.

- **Implementation Performance:** refers to the approaches/activities' successes and challenges during implementation.
- **Stakeholder Satisfaction**: evaluates the satisfaction of stakeholders, including community members, local leaders, implementing partners, and government entities, with the project's activities and approaches. It assesses the extent to which stakeholders perceive the project's efforts as effective in meeting their needs and expectations.
- **Impact Assessment:** assesses the overall impact of the project's activities and approaches in reducing the impacts of disasters, evaluating the extent to which the project has achieved its intended goals and objectives.

2. Inclusion: measures active and meaningful participation, involvement, and consideration of all individuals, particularly those who are marginalized or vulnerable (namely pregnant and lactating mothers, women, and people with disabilities), in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of disaster relief efforts.

- **Active Participation:** assesses the extent of active engagement and involvement of vulnerable community members in the project's areas of intervention, considering their specific inclusion challenges, gaps, and potential strategies for improvement.

- **Needs:** examines the project activities' success in responding to the specific needs of vulnerable groups through inclusive activities whose impact and results effectively address their unique requirements and priorities during disaster response and preparedness.

3. Localization: refers to the to the process of shifting power, decision-making, and resources to the local level, fostering the independent capacity of local actors: communities, local leaders, and local implementing partners and local government authorities to manage and respond to disasters efficiently in an independent and sustainable manner as a result of projects' activities.

- **Stakeholder Capacity**: knowledge, skills and organizational capabilities of local actors, including community members, local leaders, implementing partners, and local government authorities as a result of the projects' activities.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** availability and commitment from partnerships and relevant stakeholders to ensure effective disaster risk management and inclusion.

4. Scalability: pertains to the feasibility and potential of a project activity or approach to be successfully expanded or replicated at a national level, with comparable levels of success and impact as observed in previous implementation.

- **Adaptability:** capacity to be easily modified or customized to suit different contexts or settings (diverse population, geographical areas and topography, communication and accessibility facilities, etc.) Demonstrated success of implementation and results in different settings might be an indication of adaptability.
- **Sustainability:** potential of activity/approach to be maintained and continue delivering benefits even after scaling up, considering aspects such as community ownership, knowledge maintenance, stakeholder engagement and integration into existing systems or structures.
- **Resource Requirement:** the amount of resources needed to implement and sustain the activity or approach will influence its scalability potential (financial resources, human resources, infrastructure, technology and time required for implementation and continuation).
- **Monitoring Pragmatism:** existing effective monitoring mechanisms.

Analysis Framework Table

Factors and Indicators		Questions[1]	Respondent Target Groups
1. Effectiveness		***How effective are Suco Disaster Risk reduction plans and activities (in both preparedness and mitigation) in reducing disaster risk and addressing the needs of target groups?***	
1.1.	Implementation Performance	• Which activities posed more challenges during planning and implementation? • What were the challenges? • What factors contributed to these challenges? • Which activities were more successful during planning and implementation? • What factors contributed to this success? • What kind of changes do you think the activity brought to the lives of communities? (impact/results)	AHP Agency representative for DRP Local implementing partners Civil Protection National and municipal level Local authorities
1.2.	Stakeholder Satisfaction	• Did the project adequately consider and incorporate your perspectives and feedback during the design and implementation process? • How satisfied are you with the level of collaboration and coordination between the project and local implementing partners, government entities, and relevant organizations? • What were some of the challenges in collaboration with AHP agencies during this project? • What suggestions or recommendations do you have for improving stakeholder satisfaction and ensuring greater inclusion and participation in future disaster relief efforts? • This indicator will be further developed through answers under other factors and indicators that show stakeholder satisfaction.	Civil Protection at National Level
1.3	Impact Assessment	• What kind of changes did activities bring to the lives of communities? • How did the project activities increase the climate resilience of the community in general?	AHP Agency representative for DRP Local implementing partners Civil Protection National and municipal level Local authorities

[1] The questions in the table that correspond to each factor and indicator resume those that were asked during interviews. The full interview script and order of questions can be found in Annex.

			Vulnerable Communities
2. Inclusion:		***How effectively are the voices of vulnerable persons ensuring their participation in national and sub national level decision-making platforms in regards to climate resilience, disaster preparedness, and response? What evidence exists of participation of vulnerable groups? How will their needs be integrated into climate resilience and disaster preparedness plans?***	
2.1.	Active Participation	• To what extent did the project engage vulnerable community members (pregnant and lactating mothers) in your areas of intervention? • Were there any particular challenges to the inclusion of pregnant and lactating mothers? • To what extent do you think the project engaged vulnerable community members (women) in your areas of intervention? • Were there any particular challenges to the inclusion of women? • To what extent do you think the project engaged vulnerable community members (people with disabilities) in your areas of intervention? • What were the particular challenges to the inclusion of people with disabilities? • Are there still any particular gaps regarding inclusion that were not covered above? • What could be done to cover these gaps?	AHP Agency representative for DRP Local implementing partners Civil Protection National and municipal level Local authorities
		• Which activities from the Disaster READY Project were you involved in? • Did you feel like you were able to offer your contribution in the activities you participated? • If yes, what were your contributions specifically? • If not, why not? • Did you face any challenges in participating or making your voice heard during the planning/ implementation of the activities? • What was the challenge? • What, if anything, could have been done better for you to feel more included?	Vulnerable groups — (i) pregnant and/or lactating mothers, (ii) women, (iii) people with disabilities, (iv) female headed households
2.2.	Needs	• What do you think were the most successful activities regarding the inclusion of pregnant and lactating mothers, in terms of responding to their needs? • Please provide examples • What do you think were the most successful activities regarding the inclusion of women in terms of responding to their needs? • What do you think were the most successful activities regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities in terms of responding to their needs?	AHP Agency representative for DRP Local implementing partners Civil Protection National and municipal level Local authorities

		• Were there any particular needs you had that were not met? • What were those needs?	
		• Do you feel like the activity/activities reflected your needs and priorities in case a disaster occurs?	Vulnerable groups — (i) pregnant and/or lactating mothers, (ii) women, (iii) people with disabilities, (iv) female headed households
2.3.	Capacity	• How did the capacity of vulnerable community members increase in terms of mitigating the effects of climate change?	AHP Agency representative for DRP Local implementing partners Civil Protection National and municipal level Local authorities
		• After the activities were implemented, what benefits did you encounter as a result?	Vulnerable groups — (i) pregnant and/or lactating mothers, (ii) women, (iii) people with disabilities, (iv) female headed households
3. Localization:		***What are the factors that enable CSOs to effectively implement inclusive disaster risk reduction at community-level in climate resilience and disaster preparedness?***	
3.1	Stakeholder Capacity	• In your view, what is the level of capacity of CSOs and local authorities/community leaders to implement inclusive disaster risk reduction at community level independently? • Please give an example • What could be done to strengthen the capacity of CSOs and local authorities/community leaders to implement inclusive disaster risk reduction at community level independently? • In your view, to what extent are communities able to independently respond to disasters independently in your area of implementation? • Please give an example • What could be done to strengthen the capacity of communities to independently respond to disasters in your area of implementation?	AHP Agency representative for DRP Local implementing partners Civil Protection National and municipal level Local authorities Vulnerable Communities
3.2	Stakeholder Engagement	In your view, how do NGOs and local authorities/community leaders perceive their	

		responsibility in implementing inclusive disaster risk reduction at community-level in climate resilience and disaster preparedness?	
4. Scalability:		***Which project activities/approaches have the potential to be effectively scaled up at a national level to achieve comparable levels of success?***	
4.1.	Adaptability	This indicator will be measured after comparing research results and responses from all target groups regarding effectiveness, inclusion and localization of similar approaches in the different areas of intervention	
4.2.	Sustainability	This indicator will be measured after comparing research results and responses from all target groups regarding community ownership, stakeholder engagement and integration into existing systems or structures.	
4.3.	Resource Requirement	This indicator will be measured after comparing research results and responses from all target groups regarding community ownership, stakeholder engagement and integration into existing systems or structures.	AHP Agency representative for DRP Civil Protection at National Level
4.4	Monitoring Pragmatism:	This indicator will be measured after comparing research results and responses from all target groups regarding community ownership, stakeholder engagement and integration into existing systems or structures.	AHP Agency representative for DRP

Table 2 Analysis Framework Table with factors and sub-factors, including the respective questions from questionnaires at community level, KIIs and FGDs.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Triangulation method

The research methodology was primarily based on qualitative research tools, combining open-ended questions and qualitative responses with close-ended questions, while triangulating with secondary data from existing DRP monitoring datasets and reports. This approach is due to the nature of the project scope and research objectives, and therefore considered appropriate for revealing new information, particularly regarding effectiveness, inclusion and location of project activities.

The data collection tools included key informant interviews (KIIs) with target beneficiaries from the vulnerable communities directly, representatives from national and subnational Government entities (namely Civil Protection Authority at national level, and Disaster Management Committees at sub-national levels), implementing AHP agencies, and respective local implementing partners. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were carried out amongst community members, especially from vulnerable groups, in selected project locations.

Regarding quantitative data, this research considered results from previous evaluations (namely baseline and endline studies and surveys) for DRP1 for each agency to reflect the overall results at consortium level. This data complemented the analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the research's data collection results.

3.2. Tools & Participants

The number of participants for this research was defined considering a comprehensive approach to ensure representation from various stakeholders involved in the disaster risk reduction and climate resilience efforts. The aim was to include a diverse range of perspectives and insights from key actors in all areas of implementation. This included vulnerable community groups in each area (women, pregnant and lactating mothers, people with disabilities and female headed households), local and national government authorities, implementing local partners, AHP agencies and other partners in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

The number of participants in the study was determined by considering the sample size for the DRP II baseline study and proportionally adapting to the size of this study. Including every Suco where the project is implemented was taken into consideration, as well as including every implementing partner. Practical feasibility for the research was further taken into account when defining the representative subset, such as time and budget constraints for data collection and analysis. This was reviewed and agreed amongst agencies during the inception report before determining the final number of participants.

Regarding the translation of the research questions, this was a collaborative process between the consultant and agencies' focal points during the inception workshops. They drew on their experience in interpreting and translating language to Tetum for surveys and questionnaires from previous endeavors. Nonetheless, by the end of the data collection process it was clear that some challenges still emerged in terms of respondents' comprehension of the question's purpose, leading to occasional ambiguity or over generalization in their responses. Meaningful conclusions can still be drawn, which are further explained in the respective analysis sections in the subsequent chapter.

Regarding the FGDs, there were four key questions to guide the discussions, related to the three research factors of effectiveness, inclusion and localization. Facilitators, which included both male and female staff from local implementing partners, made sure that all participants understood the question and were able to apply the concepts to practical examples, guiding the

discussion with follow-up questions according to the discussion taking place. The table below represents an outline of the FGDs for this research.

Focus Group Discussions	CARE	CARITAS	Oxfam	Plan	WV	TOTAL
Women (including pregnant and lactating mothers)	1	0	1	1	1	**4**
Men	1	0	1	1	0	**3**
Youth female	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Youth male	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Total	**2**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**9**

Table 3 Number and type of FGDs

There were four key questions to guide the FGDs related to the three research factors of effectiveness, inclusion and localization. Facilitators (composed of women, men and people with disability representative from RHTO) made sure that all participants understood the question and were able to apply the concepts to practical examples, guiding the discussion with follow-up questions according to the discussion taking place

3.3. Data Collection Plan and Timeline

Field data collection took place from the 30th of May until the 23rd of June 2023. Each agency covered areas of intervention and carried out 2 FGDs in the Sucos highlighted in bold (mostly accessibility and practical considerations were taken into account when selecting the Sucos for FGDs).

Target areas

- CARE: **Viqueque**
- CAN-DO: **Manatuto, Bobonaro**
- Oxfam: **Liquiça**, **Oecusse, Dili, Ermera**
- Plan: **Lautem and Ainaro**
- World Vision: **Bobonaro**

4. Key Findings

4.1 Sample size

Informants at community level

Total Partners and Authorities	68	27%
Total Community Members	180	73%
Grand Total	**248**	**100%**

Table 4 Number and percentage of informants at community level per target group and AHP agency

	Plan	Oxfam	Caritas	CARE	World Vision	Total	%
Local Implementing Partner	1	5	2	0	1	9	4%
CP Municipal Staff	2	1	1	1	1	6	2%
SDMC Representative/Local Authority	12	25	0	11	5	53	21%
Community Members (female headed household)	11	16	0	8	5	40	16%
Community Members (pregnant and/or lactating mothers)	12	17	0	11	5	45	18%
Community Members (women)	16	15	0	13	5	49	20%
Community Members (people with disabilities)	12	18	0	11	5	46	19%
Total	66	97	3	55	27	248	100%

Table 5 Overall sample respondent distribution at community level per target group and AHP Agency

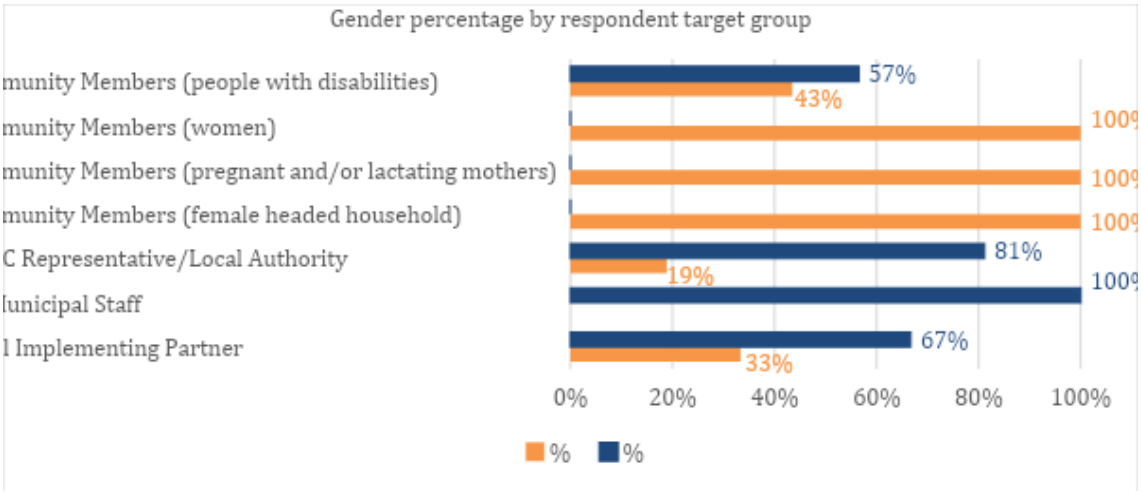

Chart 2: Percentage of respondents segregated by gender at community level

The total sample size disaggregated by gender reflects a significant gender imbalance in key roles at decision-making levels, such as Civil Protection municipal staff and local authorities, which are overwhelmingly male.

Key Informants at National Level

- Civil Protection at National Level:
  - President of Civil Protection Authority(CPA), Ismail da Costa Babo,
  - Second land Commander CPA, Martinho Fatima,
  - Director of National Directorate of Disaster Risk Management, Agostinho Cosme Belo,
- Agency Representatives:
  - Plan International
  - CAN DO
  - Care International
  - Oxfam
  - World Vision
- Partners in DRR:
  - Mercy Corps
  - IOM (International Organization for Migration)
  - CVTL (Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste)

4.2 Effectiveness

How effective are Suco Disaster Risk reduction plans and activities (in both preparedness and mitigation) in reducing disaster risk and addressing the needs of target groups?

- *Which activities were more successful during planning and implementation?*
- *What factors contributed to this success?*
- *Which activities posed more challenges during planning and implementation?*
- *What were the challenges?*
- *What factors contributed to these challenges?*
- *What kind of changes do you think the activity brought to the lives of communities? (impact/results)*

4.2.1 Most successful activities

According to respondent target groups for the section on effectiveness (Civil Protection Municipal and National Staff, Local Implementing Partners, SDMC Representatives/Local Authorities, AHP agency representatives and other partners), the most successful activities regarding planning and implementation were within the categories of Community Action Planning (CAP), Small Scale Disaster Risk Mitigation Activities and Participatory Community Risk Assessment (PCRA) and Gender and People with Disability related activities.

The graph below shows the percentage of total respondents for this section at community-level (67) who mentioned which activities were more successful.

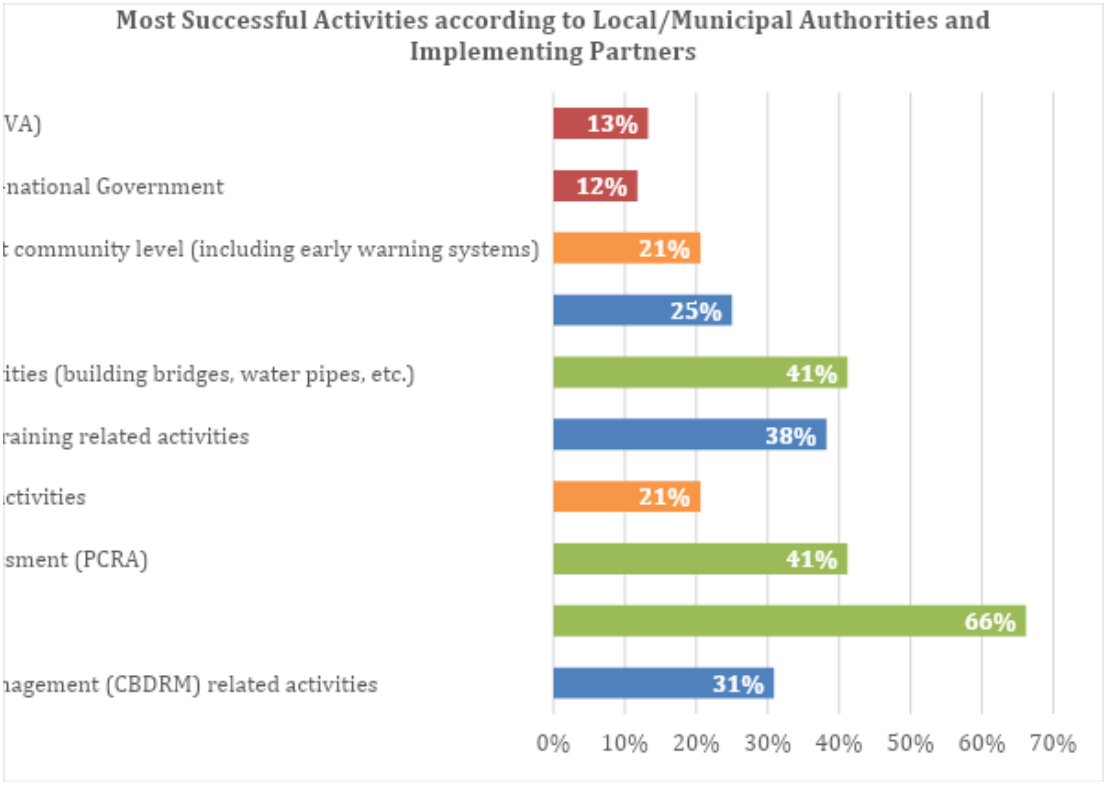

Chart 3 Results of community-level informant interviews on most successful activities

At local community-level, the questions on most successful activities were multiple choice with the option to select more than one. Whenever respondents did not select any or selected the option 'other' and then mentioned more specific activities, these were later added to the correct category/group. The results show that the overwhelming majority of respondents reported

Community Action Planning as the most successful activity in terms of planning and implementation (66%). Small Scale Disaster Mitigation Activities, such as building bridges and water pipes, were also highly mentioned (41%) and Participatory Community Risk Assessment (PCRA). The least mentioned, in turn, were coordination with national and subnational government (12%) and the Climate Vulnerability Assessment (13%).

These results match those reported in the DRP I endline study. The DRP I endline noted nearly 100% of respondents reported the development of disaster plans for communities, schools, and churches as the most effective activities. The report also noted that "90%, and 86%, of targeted Sucos, and Aldeias respectively, have developed strategies to reduce risks and respond to disasters."[2]

In this evaluation, an open-ended question followed, to mention the reasons for this success. The responses were later categorized per main topics, which are explained in the table below, as well as the percentage of mentions across stakeholders at community level.

Category	Description /Examples	Percentage of mentions
Activity Effectiveness	Refers to the actual results of the activity in terms of impact in the community and inclusiveness of the most vulnerable groups. That is, whenever respondents refer to the fact that communities were able to apprehend information from the activities and/or were subsequently able to put them in practice, their response was categorized as "activity effectiveness".	56 %
Community Engagement	Refers to active participation of the community in the activities, for mostly the following reasons: showing interest, demonstrated knowledge; demonstrated trust; offered to volunteered; community was handed decision-making power (physical activities like conserving water springs was through community decision with transparency and money is allocated to these small-scale activities); good communication and reach to spread information (communities were informed of the activities taking place).	53%
Local Authority Support	Refers to good coordination with local authorities, clarity in division of responsibilities amongst all actors, the SMDC being already in place and active, authorities engaging and support community to join, communities trust authorities, as one of the main factors for activity success.	43%
NGO Performance	Denotes whenever respondents referred to good coordination and commitment from the local implementing partner and the provision of technical support on their behalf allowed for the success of the activities.	24%

Table 6 Categorization of reasons for activity success at community level and respective proportion of mentions

[2] Timor-Leste DRP Endline Evaluation Report, 09/2022, p.8.

A slight majority of 56% of respondents at community level provided a qualitative reason for the success of the activities which have been categorized in the activities provided in the graph above.

Findings at national level match those at community level, both in terms of the most successful activities regarding planning and implementation, and the reasons for their success. Respondents from AHP Agencies and other agencies/organizations working in DRR and Civil Protection at national level also mentioned CAP, PCRA, Small-scale Disaster Risk Mitigation Activities and inclusive training as most successful activities. About the main factors for success, they subsequently mentioned coordination between government and implementing agencies both at national and local level, whenever it occurred, as the main enabling factors for this success.

The overall comments on success from government partners were of appreciation and recognition of the projects' positive outcomes.

> "Planning and design of the project was done by AHP agencies after consulting at local level, identified target areas and beneficiaries themselves. Before implementing, they consulted with Civil Protection."
> (Agostinho Cosme Belo, Director of National Directorate of Disaster Risk Management)

Regarding specific activities, Martinho Fatima, Second Land Commander, Civil Protection Authority, directly mentioned non-physical activities, such as trainings to be more effective during planning and implementation because less challenges arose, while community knowledge was improved. Physical activities on the other hand pose more challenges.

From AHP agencies, successes on particular project activities also relate to CAP (Community Action Planning), PCRA (Participatory Community Risk Assessment) and Small-scale Disaster Mitigation Activities. According to Plan International's experience, CAP allowed for the inclusion of most vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities. This was further well received at municipal level. Women leadership training and associated activities also prove successful in encouraging women to participate in community planning and assume leadership roles. (CARE and World Vision). The structural issue of insufficient female representation in SDMCs is being addressed through training and awareness raising on women leadership and participation. Even if ratios of men to women in leadership positions and participation at community level remains unequal, the few women who do participate show strength and influence (World Vision). Inclusive training that capacitates women to use early warning system equipment and assume different roles at SDMC level also proved successful in this regard (IOM).

Additionally, as mentioned by Oxfam and CVTL, simulation activities also prove effective, as a practical and interactive learning process that allows for more effective knowledge assimilation. According to CVTL's, communities practice the simulation at least once or twice a year.

A particularly successful result from project activities was the reestablishment of the Suco Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) in the project target communities as a result of DRP, further allowing for improved coordination with local authorities (Oxfam and Plan International):

> "One of the biggest successes was the reestablishment of the Suco Disaster Management Committee, because coordination with Suco and village chief and reactivated structure that was not working — this reestablished the role and responsibility of each division when a disaster occurs."
> (Plan International)

Activities that tackle structural issues such as localization were also seen to be successful, especially community training on writing project and financial proposals to ask for government funding.

In terms of coordination, AHP mentioned the internal coordination with the Consortium to be effective and facilitate their work, such as developing joint proposals and timelines. Collaboration with church and other local partners has proven successful and improving impact reach (Caritas).

According to IOM, the most successful activities were also related to Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) training: protection modules and risks in emergency situations; capacity building on gender, power imbalances, GBV risks, and trafficking of persons.

4.2.2. Greatest Challenges

The challenges mentioned in the open-ended questions at community level, in turn, were divided into the following categories, after a thorough analysis of the responses and categorization into the most mentioned topics:

Category	Description / Examples	Percentage of Mentions
Community participation	Category refers to when participants don't attend the activities or are not on time, not interested or a priority, not aware; need payment for physical activities or want something in exchange; have to attend to other responsibilities like their own job/business; cultural barrier.	72%
Support from authorities	Lack of support/coordination from local authorities; local and national government doesn't give priority to DRM and climate change; unclear responsibilities in DRM at local level; no legal base for CVA assessment; lack of integrated plan at municipal level; perceived as NGO responsibility/dependent on NGO; communities choose to follow authorities instead; NGOs need to coordinate better with authorities; lack of trust from NGO.	26%
Accessibility	Bad weather causes delays/not possible to travel, far distance, bad roads	19%
Insufficient resources	Lack of financial resources, equipment, material, transportation that compromises the success of the activities. Examples of equipment, sound system and projector.	19%
Insufficient capacity	Dependency on NGO/lack of capacity of local staff. No maintenance continuity.	12%
Training effectiveness	Difficult to change communities' ways and culture/ limited understanding even after training or community action planning; communities don’t have capacity/ enough knowledge to implement what they learn; needs follow up to trainings	12%

Vulnerable groups participation	Women are not allowed to participate-, people with disabilities cannot access, no joint plan between RHTO in some municipalities, not enough awareness raising about the importance of this.	10%
Risk identificatio n challenges	Refers to difficulties in identifying priority or risks: mapping takes a long time, timelines are unclear, CAP process is not uniform, people are not yet aware of which risks to identify.	9%
Others	Understanding that it is Civil Protection(CP)'s responsibility so don't give importance to Suco disaster management; not trusting agencies, political issues, no continued support from agencies; planted trees but they didn't grow.	4%

Table 7 Categorization of reasons for challenges at community level and respective proportion of mentions

Not surprisingly, as much as community participation and support from local authorities, two of the factors that were most identified as reasons for activity success, are also mentioned as challenges. This can be interpreted as representing crucial factors in determining the actual success of activities, indicating that both community participation and authority commitment is a fundamental aspect across all activities and, being a determining factor for their successful implementation, it is also one of the most difficult aspects to manage and guarantee.

"Some challenges we observe is that some community members, when it is time to attend the activities in their Suco, they expect to get something in return. If they don't get an immediate compensation they do not want to attend."
(Female youth, Bobonaro)

Even though secondary data shows that CP was involved form the design phase, it seems that CP would still like to be more involved. President of CPA, Ismail da Costa Babo, mentioned that the project does match the governments' priorities, however, AHP agencies should involve government more in the design stage. This would help to define what can be done by the government and what can be done by international agencies.

According to Agostinho Cosme Belo, Director of National Directorate of Disaster Risk Management, there are some challenges but overall these do not represent big obstacles. However, the suggestion is, as President Babo mentioned above, for AHP agencies to engage the government more in the earlier stages of project design.

"The suggestion is for AHP to continue sharing their plan with the government in advance that helps government be able to present the plan in the council of ministers and improve coordination between AHP and CP."
(Agostinho Cosme Belo, Director of National Directorate of Disaster Risk Management)

Martinho Fatima, Second Land Commander, CPA, also mentioned coordination as a major challenge, especially on behalf of AHP during the initial phase of the project, more than during implementation, and added that CPA could also improve coordination efforts:

"Coordination at municipal level is not the best yet. Civil Protection authority could also improve coordination. Before, coordination was centralized at national level, now it's at both municipal and national level and some struggles with coordination arise."
(Martinho Fatima, Second Land Commander, Civil Protection Authority)

AHP Agencies also overwhelmingly recognize the issue of poor coordination, especially with CPA at national level, as CPA's plan is not available until later on in the project implementation phase, creating issues in incompatibility of government and agencies' plans (Plan International).

Additionally, lack of clarity of responsibilities and mandates at national and municipal level across government entities is an issue for coordination in planning and implementation. Mandates across line ministries, as DRR is a cross cutting issue, are often unclear: even though the Organic CPA Law places all DRR under Civil Protection at national level, it does not mention coordination mechanisms with other line ministries often involved (Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Ministry of Health, Ministry of State Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, etc.) or how responsibilities are divided between authorities at municipal level (World Vision, IOM):

"When we started DRP I, the government structure changed, moving from MSSI to Civil protection. At national level we managed to cooperate with civil protection authority, but at the municipality level, the mandates are not clear: there are issues with overlapping, we're not sure who to go to in what circumstance. This affects the coordination at municipal level, in terms of who leads the coordination at municipal level down to post administrative and the Suco."
(World Vision)

Another challenge related to coordination is considered to be the dependency on international agencies and local implementing partners to organize regular meetings, for mostly limited allocation of financial, human, technical resources or commitment on the government end. (Oxfam, World Vision, IOM, CVTL).

Regarding particular activities and challenges, Martinho Fatima, Second Land Commander, Civil Protection Authority mentioned the physical activities as more challenging, such as early warning systems, mainly because of accessibility and poor infrastructure challenges, and mentioned the issue of sustainability, as the natural hazards such as floods and strong winds often damage the systems themselves. However, according to Commander Fatima, non-physical activities also pose some challenges, since despite the quality of the training, community knowledge is not yet sufficient. For example, teaching communities how to fix and maintain early warning systems for long term sustainability after they have been set up should be enforced.

Moreover, early warning systems pose challenges starting with limited information available for trigger warnings, and the structural flow of information from national to local level. For example, oftentimes DNMG (National Directorate of Meteorology and Geophysics) has already forecasted bad weather but communities, for lack of warning and awareness, kept on planting, resulting in the eventual destruction of crops. Efforts have been made to build a joint platform to create this channel, but the changes at Suco level are not visible. To address this issue, a Municipal Forum between NGOs and CSOs is being created to plan to work together with FAO and other agencies in the municipality that work on DRR technical issues, as a mechanism for coordinated action for all stakeholders (World Vision).

AHP Agencies also mentioned Small Scale Disaster Mitigation activities as those posing the most challenges, as the unpredictability of weather and road conditions significantly limits accessibility to isolated communities who are more vulnerable to disasters. Challenges in terms of accessibility

to isolated locations because of topography and poor road conditions were a challenge to the implementation of all activities and to spreading information to the communities across all KIIS.

Oxfam and World Vision highlighted the potential effectiveness of savings groups, despite the notable challenge posed by families' extremely low incomes. The severity of this financial constraint makes it difficult for these families to allocate any funds either for their own savings or for contributing to the savings groups. The overarching issue of families grappling with low income not only hampers their ability to establish savings groups but also prevents them from accumulating sufficient resources to meet their essential requirements in the event of a disaster, even after the establishment of such savings groups.

According to CVTL's experience, trainings and other 'software' activities pose more challenges than hardware, as in needs and vulnerabilities assessment communities often refer more to needing WASH facilities, access to clean water and other infrastructure rather than trainings.

Other challenges include internal AHP coordination: despite effective internal coordination, uniformity of templates for activity development and implementation across agencies could be improved (Caritas). Another challenge mentioned by the president is the fact that DRP only covers some municipalities, and not the whole Timorese territory.

Women's participation, despite good results from the activities, continues to be an obstacle:

> "Ensuring a higher proportion of women in the disaster management committee is a challenge. At the Suco council level, the majority of committee members are men, falling short of the government's objective of having a minimum of 30% female representation. In reality, due to the existing structure, the representation stands at 26%. Despite our efforts to foster inclusion by engaging youth and individuals with disabilities in advocating for potential female candidates, we have only been able to attain the 26% mark."
> (World Vision)

Mercy Corps has encountered significant challenges in the effectiveness of early warning system activities, primarily related to information dissemination. In Timor-Leste, the Civil Protection (CP) department is responsible for disseminating information and coordinating responses. The mechanism of dissemination does not properly reach local communities, as it goes from the National Directorate of Meteorology and Geophysics (DNMG) to Civil Protection and Municipal Committees directly, centralizing information at national and municipal level and subsequently creating a gap in community level dissemination. The responsibility for early warning dissemination should ideally lie with CP, but ensuring vulnerable communities' access to information in both urban and rural areas remains a struggle. The centralized nature of information at urban and municipality levels, and obstacles to data sharing mechanisms hinders its dissemination to vulnerable communities. Mercy Corps has tried to facilitate equipment for Suco members to disseminate information, but challenges persist in developing a more effective early warning system dissemination mechanism to overcome these barriers that will be sustainable.

Additionally, the absence of a single updated and unified national coordinating document such as a Contingency plan, poses a great challenge. This creates confusion on each stakeholders' mandates and responsibilities. The delay in the approval of the Disaster Risk Management policy (since 2016) has also created ambiguity surrounding roles and responsibilities, adversely impacting community involvement and preparedness efforts.

Comparing the "Activities that posed more challenges" in the chart below with the most successful activities (Community Action Planning, Small Scale Disaster Mitigation Activities, and Participatory Community Risk Assessment it can be deduced that these activities that were both

successful and posed challenges fell under the same categories in both instances. Notably, the similarity in factors contributing to success and challenges further underscores this observation, determining which factors are crucial for activity success. Respondents appear to recognize these activities as particularly promising for broader implementation, albeit with potential challenges. However, with these challenges now identified, proactive measures can be taken during the scaling-up process to address them preemptively, facilitating a more seamless and effective implementation.

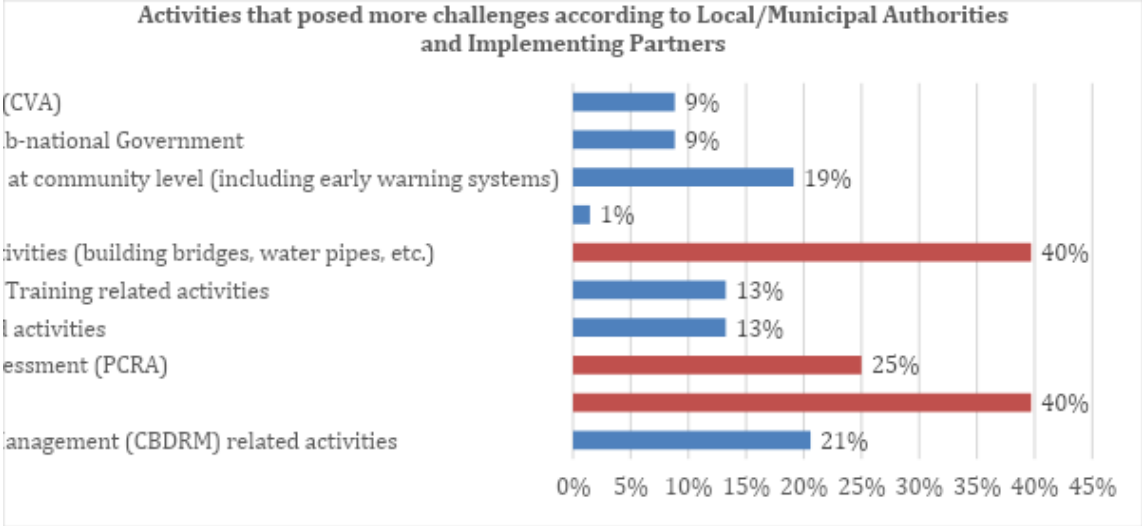

Chart 4 Results of community-level informant interviews on the activities which posed more challenges during planning and implementation

4.2.3 Changes to Community Life

One of the main findings from DRP I Endline evaluation related to effectiveness of project activities was that "the project successfully increased communities' knowledge, awareness, and preparedness capacities, indicating the potential for replicating these approaches on a larger scale" and that "the HH survey revealed that community members had improved their knowledge of risks and hazards, as 81% of community members can identify risks compared to 63% in 2018 (baseline)." Such findings are consistent with this study, as the great majority of 87% of respondents mentioned that, as a result of the activities, community members were able to identify risks and act accordingly, thus being better prepared to respond to disasters.

Respondents for this section were a total of 9 local implementing partners, among which 3 were female respondents (33%); 6 Civil Protection Municipal Staff (no female respondents); and a total of 53 respondents for SDMC local authority, including 10 female respondents (19%). The most relevant changes to community life as a result of the activities mentioned by respondents in an open-ended question were categorized in the following categories:

Category	Description / Examples	Percentage of Mentions
Capacity to identify risks and act accordingly	Comprehend early warning system, what activities they do for disaster preparedness, knowledge about goods distribution after disaster, understand early warning systems,	87%

	share knowledge with the rest of the community	
Community practices climate resilient activities	Identify, such as conserve water, save food for dry season, agriculture protection, safe water sources, creates farmers groups, not cut down trees, plant trees.	29%
Better infrastructure/facilities	Some roads are better which means communities are still able to sell their produce, more access to water	9%
Insufficient	Community is not prepared to face these disasters specially related to food security in the context of climate change (impacts food production in quantity and quality) (even though a lot of people still don't have access to this information)	4%
Easier communication with local authorities	It is now easier to coordinate with government when a disaster happens (Oecussi), managed to submit proposals to authorities and ask for support	4%
Improved inclusion	More knowledge about inclusion, more men participate in household activities, less violence	4%

Table 8 Categorization of main changes in community life and respective proportion of mentions from respondents at community level

The second most mentioned change referred to the increase of climate resilience of the communities, particularly relating to improved access to water sources and the capacity to grow and store their own food in preparation for extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. This also coincides with the findings from DRP I Endline below:

DRR measure	Target groups
Water source protection	Women
Water canalization/drainage	Women, children
Water conservation and storage	Women
Early warning information billboards	All community members
Protection wall	All community members
Tree planting in landslide prone area	All community members

Table 9 Findings from DRP I Endline on most cited DRR measures addressing the needs of social groups

Despite climate resilience being mentioned at community level, Commander Fatima expressed that this aspect is not yet very integrated in all efforts and a strong impact in terms of community

resilience has not been yet observed. However, project activities in this regard are already a good start, especially when involving farmers and climate resilient agriculture. Oxfam also mentioned sustainable agriculture as a positive outcome for climate resilience, while Caritas mentioned water and food conservation activities to have positive outcomes regarding climate resilience. Other Small-Scale activities also improve access to health services, markets, schools and clean water sources (CARE).

Similarly, in terms of changes at community level, all CPA informants mentioned significant impact for communities mostly from increased knowledge on awareness, and how to prepare and respond to disasters. Civil Protection President recognized that the project's activities improved people's awareness and knowledge, being able to act immediately in an event of a natural hazard, as well as Commander Fatima, especially when early warning systems are involved.

AHP agencies also mentioned improved knowledge at community level, including sharing of information which keeps flowing within the community, even after the activities. A factor for this success was communities being active in participation during activities and further taking their own initiative to prevent and mitigate risks in risk areas, such as planting trees where landslides might occur, as mentioned in DRP I findings. (Plan International)

According to a male FGD in Ossu de Cima, Viqueque, the community found benefits from CARE savings group activities as an effective way to prepare for disasters. In order to address remaining challenges, particularly as some communities are not yet aware of disaster preparedness, male community members discussed the need for agencies and government to work together and continue to provide trainings to the community to improve resilience.

Female respondents in Suco Luca in Viqueque Municipality revealed that after attending trainings from CARE and other NGOs, they are now ready to face disasters. For example, a lot of families already moved their houses away from the river to safer places, and others participate in savings groups to prepare for disasters and climate change. This information also arrived indirectly, through the media, as one participant mentioned. One of the participants mentioned that he received the same message from different media channels. During DRP I, CARE conducted radio broadcast through community radio in Viqueque on disaster preparedness and mitigation, while during DRP II Oxfam conducted a series of radio broadcasts through Radio Liberdade nationwide.

4.3 Inclusiveness

How effectively are the voices of vulnerable persons being included, ensuring their participation in national and sub-national level decision-making platforms in regards to climate resilience, disaster preparedness, and response?
What evidence exists of participation of vulnerable groups? How will their needs be integrated into climate resilience and disaster preparedness plans?

4.3.1 Engagement pregnant and lactating mothers

At local level, comparing the level of participation indicated by pregnant and lactating women compared to local leaders and local implementing partners: local implementing partners consider the participation of pregnant and lactating mothers less inclusive than the group of pregnant and lactating mothers themselves. Overall, most groups agree participation for this vulnerable group only occurs to some extent, even though above 30% of CP Municipal Staff selected are completely engaged.

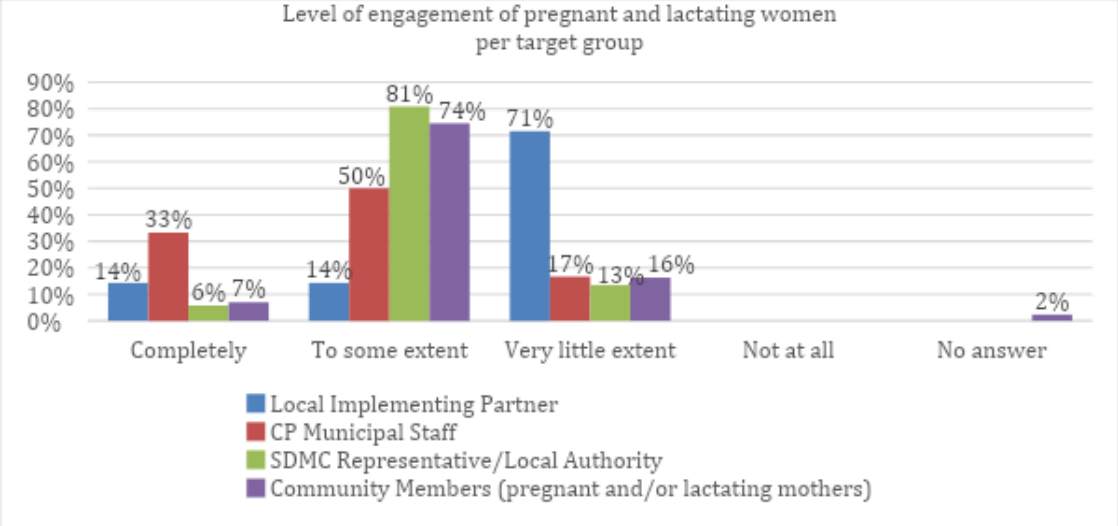

Chart 5 Level of engagement of pregnant and lactating women according to each target group at community level

The categorization of the challenges mentioned in the inclusion of pregnant and lactating women mentioned by all:

Category	Description / Examples	Percentage of Mentions
Cultural barriers	Category refers to mentions of prioritizing household duties and children, associated with cultural limitations to participation, patriarchal thinking does not give space/authority to women, women feel shy/nervous to participate/ don't have the capacity or knowledge to do so; No interest, they believe it is bad for the baby.	30%
No child care support	No support to watch the babies, takes the baby or child to activities and its distracting, baby is too small	26%

No challenges	Refers to when respondents actively said there were no challenges for the inclusion of pregnant and/or lactating mothers	22%
Poor accessibility	Far distance, struggle to walk/climb because pregnancy, a lot of waiting, cannot be away from baby	21%
Poor information	Refers to information about activities taking place not reaching them or their circles; "lack of information" in Tetum can also be interpreted at people not having enough knowledge/information to prioritize this issue, choosing to not attend for this reason	11%
Others	Health risks, can't participate in physical activities because of physical condition, no activities particularly for this group	4%
Economic reasons	Activities are not payed, need to attend other affairs, look after children	2%

Table 10 Categorization of main challenges to engagement of pregnant and lactating mothers in DRP from all respondents at community level

The fact that 22% of respondents declared to have experienced no challenges, might be in itself a challenge, as stakeholders at local level do not recognize the challenges that are naturally implied in engaging pregnant and/or lactating mothers, especially considering the other challenges mostly mentioned by respondents, such as cultural barriers (30%) and lack of childcare support (26%) and poor accessibility (21%). By breaking down the responses per target group, as in the chart below, it shows that it is pregnant and/or lactating mothers themselves who declare no challenges to being involved in the activities (25% compared to only 13% for local implementing partners, 21% for local authorities and 0% for CP Municipal staff).

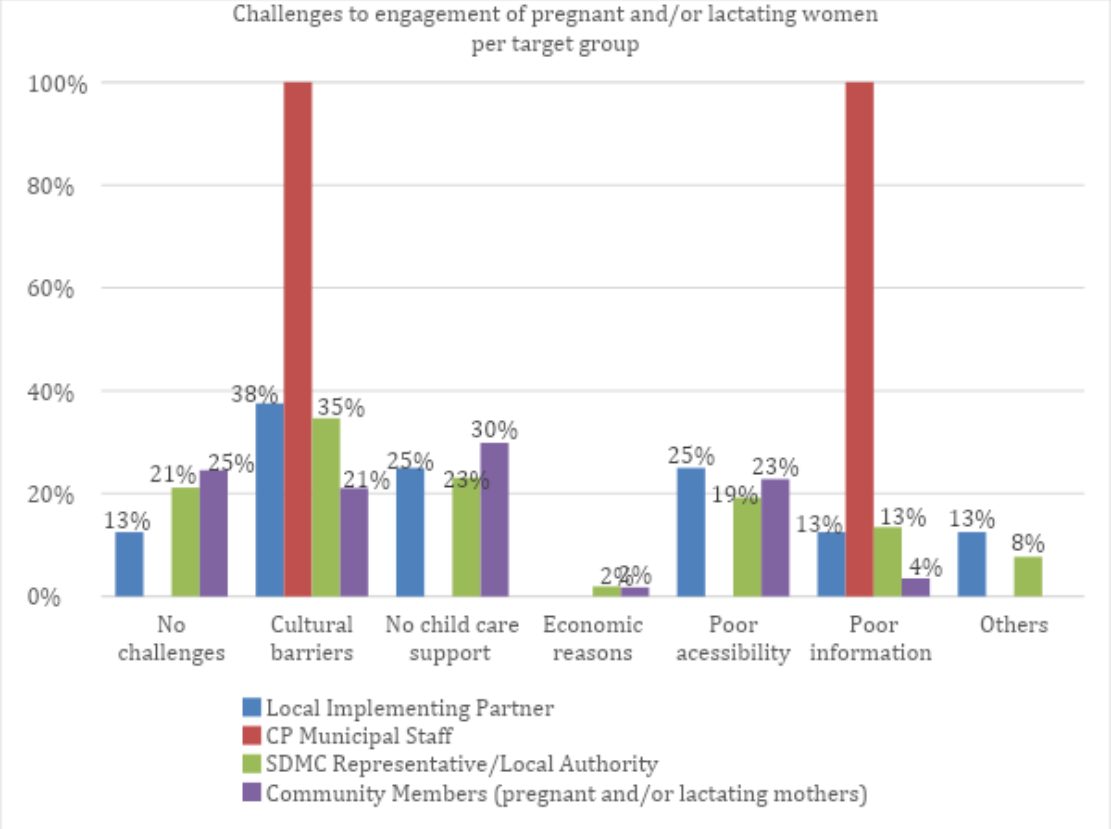

Chart 6 Challenges (categories) for the engagement of lactating and/or pregnant women according to each target group at community level

All Civil Protection informants at community level refer to poor information in their open-ended responses as an obstacle for the participation of pregnant and/or lactating mothers. As explained in the category table above, interpreted in the local language context and analyzing the answers in full sentences, this seemed to refer more to communities not having access to information about the importance of preparing for disasters. However, when responded by pregnant and/or lactating mothers themselves, they do mention it is a lack of information about the activities taking place.

Civil Protection informants at national level agreed that activities engage this group to some or very little extent, and that dissemination of information through communications platforms such as television, radio and pamphlets would be necessary to educate the community about the importance of their participation. CP informants further suggest that addressing the rooted cultural issues that hamper this target groups' full participation, such as restricting their activities to housework duties, need to be addressed as part of the efforts to increase their participation in DRP and other DRR activities. That is, women's unequal burden of household labor constitutes a barrier to their participation in SDMC, as the findings above show. However, it is not only strictly because they are busy with housework duties, but also, due to cultural beliefs and gender norms, they are not considered a necessary addition to SDMC, because such roles are attributed to the family leader, who is most often a man. As such, this aspect should be considered by DRP agencies and partners as a suggestion to further include in their activities as a way to start addressing deeply rooted cultural norms that hinder the participation of women and mothers in public affairs. Informants also suggest implementing specific activities to train mothers at the local level.

According to AHP Agencies, the main challenges consist in accessibility, as activities are often far from their homes and topography is challenging, as well as household duties and lack of support to look after their children. Creating facilities with women and child friendly spaces

could increase their participation and tackle these obstacles. In response, Word Vision is in the process of developing an SOP for women friendly space. Agencies are aware of this necessity, even though this is not yet specifically mentioned in project plans, serving as a suggestion for future implementation.

4.3.2. Engagement women

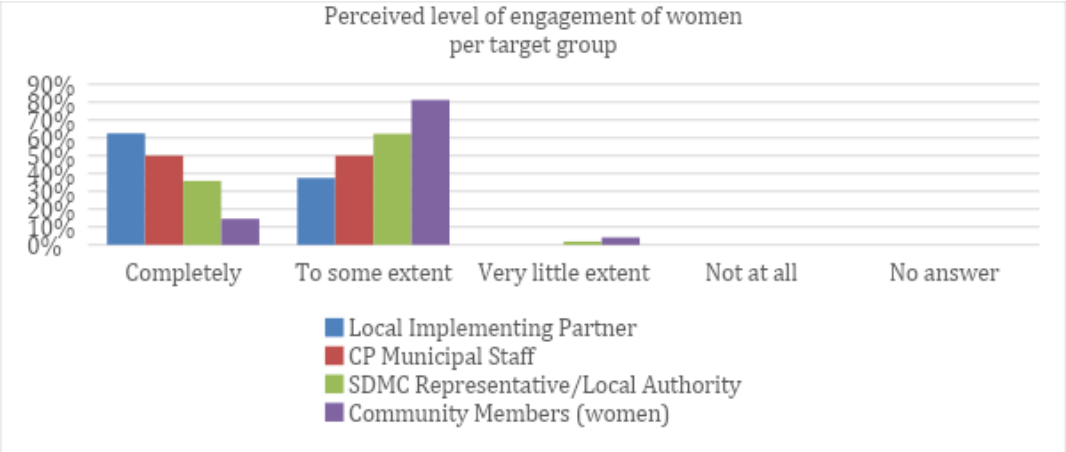

Chart 7 : Level of engagement of women according to each target group at community level

The data in Chart 7 above illustrates how stakeholder groups perceives the level of women's engagement in disaster management activities. Among "Local Implementing Partners," 63% see women are "completely" engaged and 38% view it only "to some extent." Similarly, "CP Municipal Staff" report 50% complete engagement and 50% partial engagement. "SDMC Representatives/Local Authorities" observe 36% complete engagement and 62% partial engagement. Notably, only 15% of community members (women) themselves recognize complete engagement, 81% partial engagement, and 4% engagement to "very little extent." Considering all stakeholder groups, the majority (30%) perceive women's engagement as "completely" while a significant portion (68%) acknowledges engagement "to some extent." Minimal instances (3%) note "very little extent." No group reports "not at all" engagement or provides a "no answer."

In the follow up open ended question to mention the main possible challenges to women's engagement in the activities, the categorization and respective percentage of mentions is outlined in the table below:

Category	Description / Examples	Percentage of Mentions
No challenges	their voices already included, CAP, gabion local, ROMANSA, other meetings, GEDSI already impacts distribution of household duties	18%
Cultural barriers	household duties and children, culture limits participation, patriarchal thinking does not give space/authority to women, husband does not allow, men go to represent whole household, women feel shy/nervous to participate/ don't have the capacity or knowledge to do so, no interest, no education	54%
Economic reasons	activities are not payed, have to go to market to sell their produce instead, no money for transport	4%

Poor accessibility	far distance, danger	11%
Poor dissemination of information	do not feel secure, illness, few women in active age in village	5%
Others		7%

Table 11 Categorization of main challenges to engagement of women in DRP from all respondents at community level

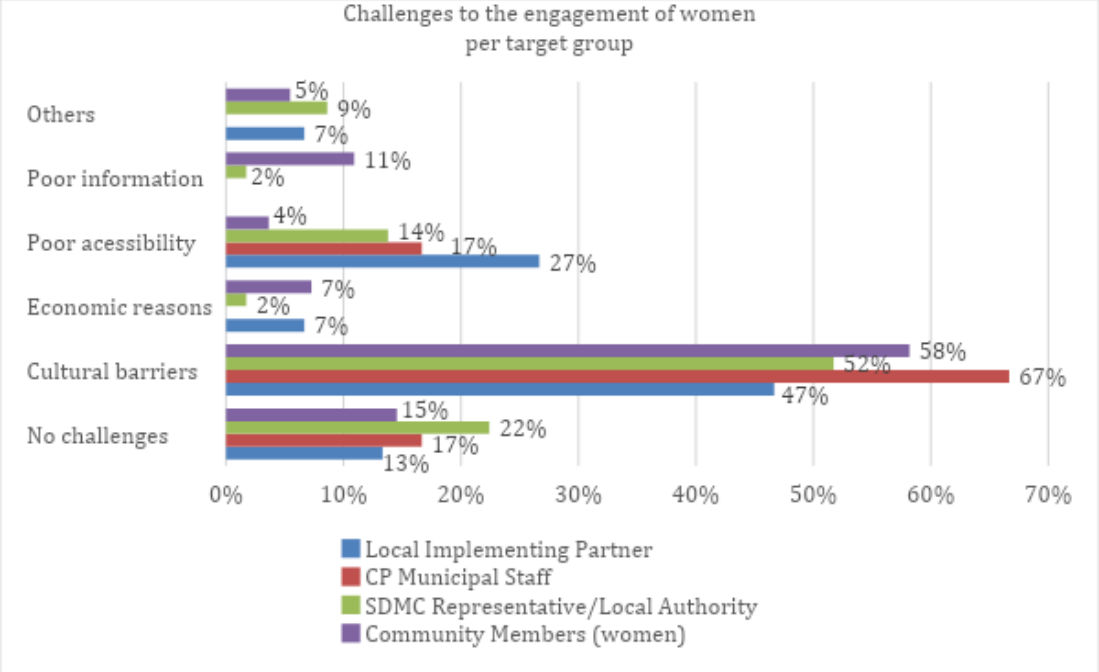

Chart 8 Challenges (categories) for the engagement of lactating and/or pregnant women according to each target group at community level

The presented data offers insights into challenges perceived by different stakeholder groups in relation to women's engagement in disaster management activities. Notably, "Cultural barriers" emerge as a prominent challenge, encompassing 47% to 67% of responses across stakeholder groups. This underscores the impactful role of cultural factors in hindering women's participation. "Economic reasons" are mentioned to a lesser extent (ranging from 2% to 7%), while challenges related to "Poor accessibility" and "Poor information" vary among stakeholder groups. It's important to note that the cumulative percentages exceed 100% since multiple challenges were indicated by each group. Overall, the data underscores the salient influence of cultural barriers in impeding women's involvement in disaster management activities across different stakeholder perspectives.

President of Civil Protection Authority believes the project engaged women completely. This is seen as an essential part of preparedness and response since assessments, simulations and evacuation plans can effectively meet women's needs.

The activities that engage women the most, according AHP agencies, particularly Oxfam, are savings groups' activities. These activities not only capacitate families, through women, to save financial resources to be able to cover their basic needs in an event of a disaster (despite some

obstacles for low income families), but they also empower women to take leadership roles and discuss, among themselves, how to respond to disasters in their communities. Gender sensitive training has also proven to result in positive changes regarding household duty levels starting to be more shared between men and women after trainings. Mercy Corps also referred to these activities as having positive outcomes in this aspect, as well as CVTL.

For AHP agencies, the main challenges for the inclusion of women also consist of cultural barriers and patriarchy patterns, as the man (family chief) is seen as the responsible to attend activities at community level in representation of the entire family. It is also a problem that there are no facilities for children to stay, allowing women to participate and be able to bring their children.

Regarding decision-making and leadership positions and municipal and local level (SDMCs), women are still underrepresented despite the efforts (around 30% representation), as cultural norms limit their engagement during community elections.

In fact, cultural barriers, particularly the unequal burden of household labor, seem to constitute the biggest obstacle to the inclusion of women, as indicated by all informants. This aspect distinctly hampers their participation within the SDMC. This observation underscores a pivotal consideration when contemplating the scaling up of the most impactful initiatives, with particular attention required for factors such as GEDSI training. Encouragingly, the feedback received from informants at the community level suggests that the GEDSI training has yielded promising outcomes. Therefore, it becomes imperative to account for these cultural intricacies, ensuring that effective strategies are in place to address the unequal distribution of household responsibilities. This proactive approach is essential in fostering the increased engagement of women within the SDMC framework and contributing to its successful expansion.

According to World Vision's experience, supporting women leadership and inclusion should not only focus on SDMCs, but instead equally try other approaches such as create a women DRR academy as a consortium joint effort for more female leadership, which would not only provide training but also the opportunity to exercise leadership skills in practice. WVTL is working through work groups with at least 50% female representation at Suco level, to involve women in every aspect of DRR.

Women in Viqueque mentioned particular activities where they had felt more involved, such as savings groups and training on gender equality which results in more community awareness for sharing household duties between men and women.

4.3.3. Engagement of people with disabilities

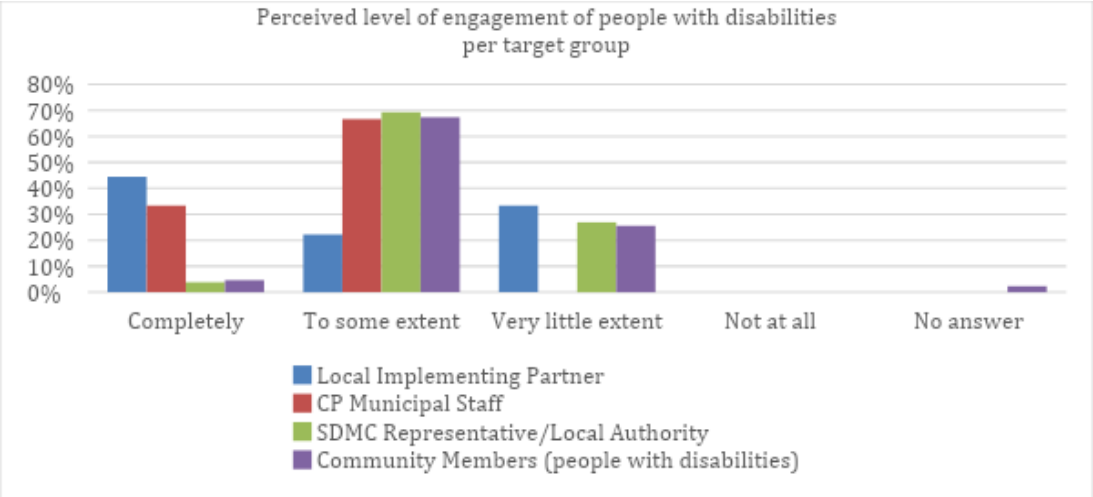

Chart 9 Level of engagement of people with disabilities according to each target group at community level

The data above reveals perceptions of people with disabilities' engagement in disaster management activities among different stakeholder groups. "Local Implementing Partners" perceive 44% complete engagement and 22% partial engagement, but a notable 33% observe very limited engagement. "CP Municipal Staff" report 33% complete and 67% partial engagement. "SDMC Representatives/Local Authorities" note 4% complete, 69% partial, and 27% very limited engagement. Only 5% of people with disabilities themselves recognize their complete engagement, 67% partial, and 26% very limited engagement, with 2% offering no answer. Overall, 9% of total respondents see complete and 65% partial engagement, while 25% perceive very limited engagement. The absence of "not at all" answers highlights the positive results of existing engagement as a results of the projects' efforts.

The categorization of the challenges mentioned in the inclusion of people with disabilities is further outlined below:

Category	**Description / Examples**	**Percentage of Mentions**
No challenges	No challenges or little challenges; very few mentions that people with disability participate well; mostly say there are no challenges because it is important for them to participate; no discrimination (it seems to be the case the of a language barrier using the word "dezafiu" (Tetum/Portuguese for challenge) might have been misinterpreted by respondents, judging from a large amount of open-ended responses claiming no challenged because inclusion is important).	6 %
Cultural barriers	Family is an obstacle, feeling incapable/shy/ashamed to participate, discrimination from community, no interest to participate	17%
Economic reasons	Activities are not payed, no money for transport, no resources for personalized assistance	2%

Poor accessibility	Far distance, no transportation	23%
Poor information	Including from authorities, the information does not reach them; no information about how many people with disabilities in the Suco	16%
Type of disability is an obstacle	(for example, physical disabilities cannot relocate; hearing disabilities cannot communicate; would need someone to accompany and not available)	20%
Others	No support from authorities; not safe for them, don't know	16%

Table 12 Categorization of main challenges to engagement of people with disabilities in DRP from all respondents at community level

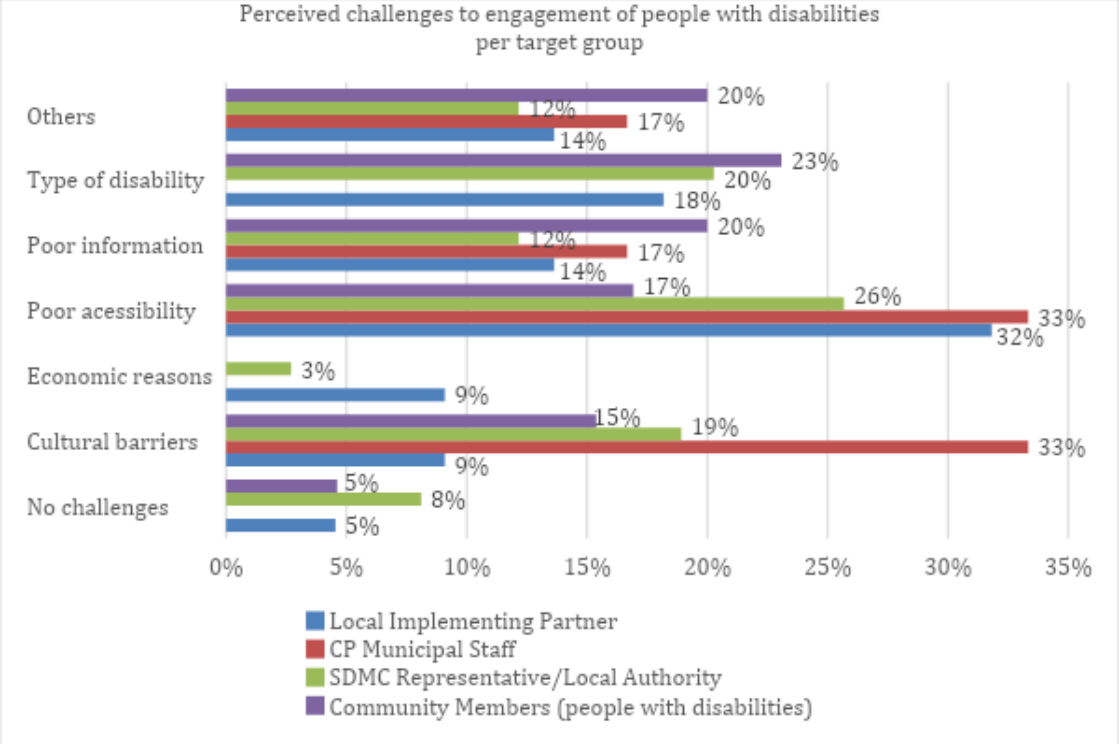

Chart 10 Challenges (categories) for people with disabilities according to each target group at community level

The data on the challenges perceived by different stakeholder groups in terms of the engagement of people with disabilities in disaster management activities reveals that Local Implementing Partners note various challenges, with 32% highlighting "Poor accessibility," 14% "Poor information," and 18% indicating "Type of disability." CP Municipal Staff and SDMC Representatives/Local Authorities point to cultural barriers (33% and 19% respectively) as significant challenges, alongside other factors. For people with disabilities, 20% identify their type of disability as an obstacle, 23% refer to other challenges and 20% to poor information. The data underscores the predominant influence of "Cultural barriers" and "Type of disability"

challenges across stakeholder groups, highlighting the need to address these barriers to enhance the engagement of people with disabilities in disaster management activities.

Civil Protection Authority informants agreed the project engaged People with disabilities only to some extent, one of the main challenges being community solidarity, which should be improved. Coordination from the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion is necessary to involve all vulnerable community members and people with disabilities, as well as avoid duplication of intervention initiatives.

The most inclusive activities in this case are seen by CP to be training on disaster risk management that include vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, and contribute to their own protection and sense of inclusion, as well as building houses for people with disabilities and accessible facilities at community level. CAP must have a focal point for people with disabilities in each Suco and each Aldeia, as a suggestion from CP President. People with disabilities struggle more to participate in physical activities but, despite many other obstacles, are sometimes able to attend the trainings and give inputs (Oxfam). In Oecussi specifically, coordination with RHTO ensures consistency of participation of people with disabilities in training and risk assessment activities.

According to AHP agencies, the obstacle to increase participation of people with disabilities is, as the results of the questionnaire indicate, accessibility, as well as cultural barriers and stereotypes, such as communities not giving the space for participation, which in turn affects the confidence of people with disabilities to do so. Additionally, families themselves are often the first obstacle by not prioritizing their participation, and not understanding the subsequent implications for lack of information and cultural aspects.

Additional obstacles are lack of resources to meet the needs of people with certain disabilities, such as incapacity to communicate: not able to understand *braille* or sign language. An option to overcome this obstacle is to create other communication methods such as cartoons, audiovisual media and find a way to engage families in this effort. (World Vision).

> "Even if assessments manage to identify people with disabilities in the communities and their needs, often times the activities try to engage them without having been tailored to meet those needs."
> (IOM)

4.3.4. Additional findings to inclusion

According to the DRP I Endline, the project has achieved successful outcomes in building the agency of women and persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction planning and implementation, providing valuable insights that can be applied to replicate and expand inclusive approaches for other social groups. Additionally, the project's impact goes beyond its immediate scope, as it has triggered a paradigm shift in how humanitarian actors perceive the needs and capabilities of marginalized groups, implying the potential to influence attitudes and practices on a broader scale. Furthermore, the successful dissemination of early warning alerts to various marginalized groups showcases the potential for scaling up inclusive and targeted communication strategies. Lastly, through the establishment and capacity building of disaster management committees, the project has strengthened communities' ability to anticipate and respond to hazards, indicating the potential for scaling up community-led disaster risk reduction efforts.

Some remaining obstacles continue to be related to resource allocation at local level, which would be one of the main factors necessary to guarantee scalability of activities. For Civil

Protection Authority President, the additional gaps to inclusion are increased coordination between agencies and Civil Protection, and more budget allocation in general.

"The government needs to divide financial resources into many areas and so we need support from our partners".
(Ismail da Costa Babo, President Civil Protection Authority)

4.4. Localization

What are the factors that enable CSOs to effectively implement inclusive disaster risk reduction at community-level in climate resilience and disaster preparedness?

4.4.1. Responsibility level of local authorities/implementing partners

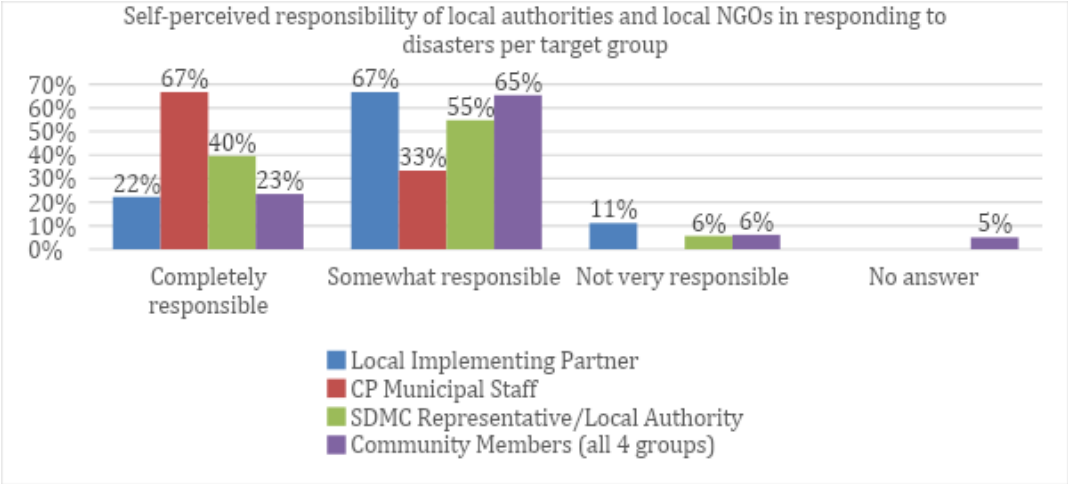

Chart 11 Self-perceived level of responsibility of local actors according to each target group at community level

The data in the above chart reveals how each target group perceives the self-understood responsibilities of local NGOs and authorities in disaster response. For Local Implementing Partners, 22% believe these entities view themselves as completely responsible, while 67% see them as somewhat responsible. Similarly, CP Municipal Staff notes 67% perceive local NGOs and authorities as completely responsible, with 33% viewing them as somewhat responsible. Among SDMC Representatives/Local Authorities, themselves, 40% respond completely responsible, 55% somewhat responsible, and 6% as not very responsible. Only 23% of community Members (all 4 groups) view local NGOs and authorities as completely responsible, 65% as somewhat responsible, and 6% as not very responsible, with 5% not responding. Across all target groups, 28% believe local NGOs and authorities perceive themselves as completely responsible, 62% as somewhat responsible, and 6% as not very responsible, while 4% do not respond. Particularly noticeable, this shows that Civil Protection Staff at municipal level consider to completely understand their responsibility in supporting communities to respond to disasters, in comparison local implementing partners and communities themselves who mostly believe this responsibility is only somewhat perceived.

According to World Vision, one of the most relevant challenges to localization is limited allocation of resources at government level. That is, besides the issue of understanding the responsibility, implementing is not feasible without resource allocation and that is where dependency on external agencies comes from, even the first step of organizing meetings. Subsequently, after the CAP has been completed, implementation relies fully on donor funds.

IOM further recognized this gap: "for localization to be effective there should be human, technical and financial resources. At the subnational level there is a big gap about funding, manning community areas."

A suggestion to tackle this issue could be for AHP consortium to advocate for resource allocation in disaster management from the government, which should come from the Municipal Authority instead of Civil Protection (as stated in the CPA degree-law).

In terms of division and understanding of responsibilities, according to CVTL, the CP law is already in place and makes responsibilities clear. However, in terms of budgeting, it is still centralized and there is not enough independence or decision-making power at municipal level. This does cause issues regarding concrete plans and simulations at municipal level as there is also no coordination mechanism to guide each stakeholders' plan of action or responsibilities. As such, it often happens (in around 60% of project implementation areas for CVTL) that the hierarchy of reporting is not followed; for example, Suco authorities often report directly to the Municipality instead of through the post administrative, for lack of coordination and reference mechanisms and unclear structure.

4.4.2. Capacity level of local authorities and partners

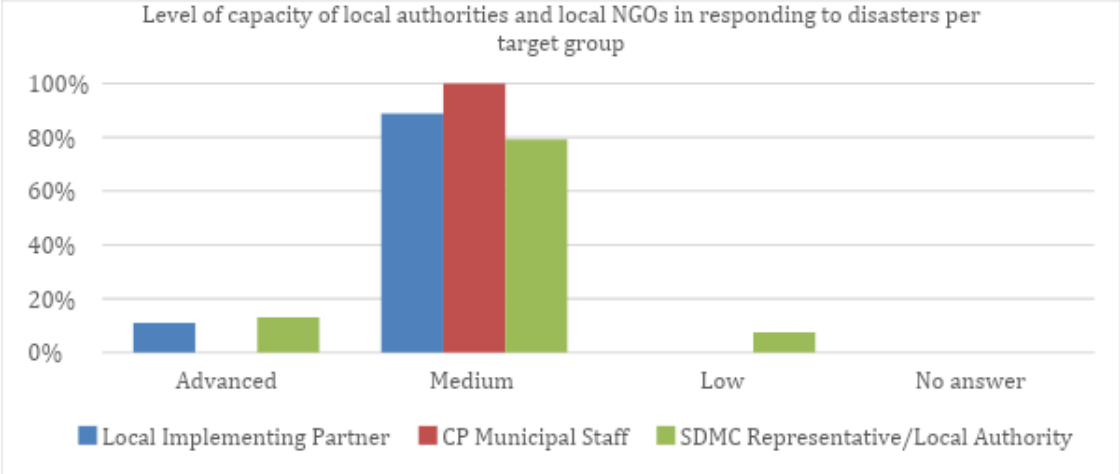

Chart 12 Level of capacity of responsibility of local actors according to each target group at community level

The data indicates the perceived capacity levels of local authorities and NGOs. Among Local Implementing Partners, 11% see their capacity as advanced, while the majority (89%) assess it as Medium. CP Municipal Staff all perceive Medium capacity (100%). For SDMC Representatives/Local Authorities, 13% view their capacity as Advanced, 79% as Medium, and 8% as Low.

Civil Protection KIIs praised AHP for considering local ownership, by involving communities and local leaders, decentralization, by integrating plans at Suco level into municipality level. Civil Protection Authority President Babo asserts that local authorities understand their responsibility to include everyone: promote women's' rights and include people with disabilities. However, President Babo refers to the need for continued training to tackle the issue of current insufficient capacity, ownership and commitment at local level:

> "Local authorities tend to not focus so much on disasters because they have to deal with many other social issues. The Suco chiefs need to be involved in decisions for disaster response, through coordination with partners. They also need training to sustain their local capacity. These training need to be done at local level to encourage ownership."
> (Ismail da Costa Babo, President Civil Protection Authority)

> "AHP helps local leadership at Suco and local level to evaluate risks and make plans to respond together with the community. Communities feel involved and have knowledge to keep implementing preparedness in their own Suco."
> (Agostinho Cosme Belo, Director of National Directorate of Disaster Risk Management)

In terms of sustainability, CP Commander Fatima suggested focusing more on approaches that can be maintained with limited resources in the future, such as early warning systems signs, which are not expensive to fix or maintain, and communities can more easily do it independently.

AHP agencies recognized an increased level of capacity in project implementation areas from the first phase of the project compared to new areas where implementation is just starting. Continued training and socialization are necessary, as well as divided responsibilities between implementing partners and local authorities.

Local authorities still rely on external agencies for data collection, according to IOM's experience.

According to the DRP I Endline evaluation, the project has successfully demonstrated the value of strategically combining partnerships and coordination at both national and subnational levels. This approach has been shown to be cost-effective while yielding significant results, thus suggesting its potential for replication in other contexts.

4.4.3. Communities' independent response capacity as result of activities

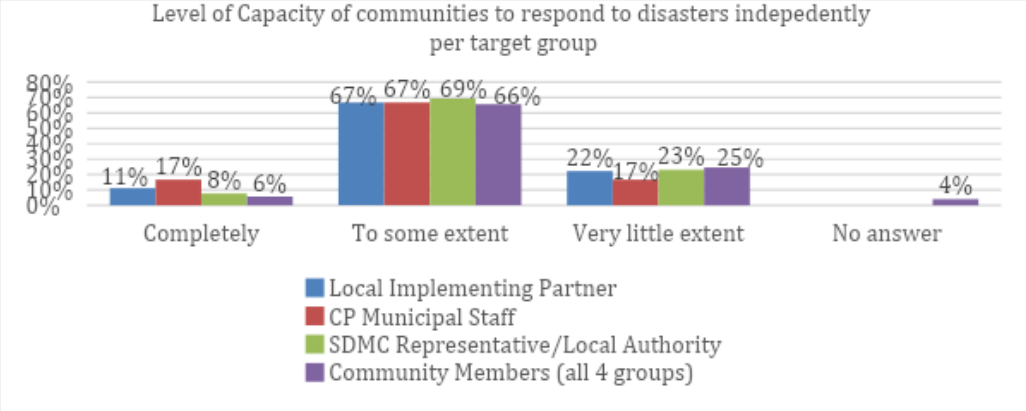

Chart 13 Communities' independent response capacity as result of activities according to each target group

The data captures diverse perceptions of community capacity for independent disaster response. Among Local Implementing Partners, 11% express confidence in communities, seeing them as completely capable. However, 67% acknowledge capacity to some extent, while 22% perceive very little extent capacity. A similar pattern emerges with CP Municipal Staff, as 17% view communities as completely capable, 67% as only to some extent capable, and 17% as very little extent capable. SDMC Representatives/Local Authorities exhibit a more reserved stance, with 8% perceiving communities as completely capable, 69% as to some extent, and 23% as very little extent. In contrast, Community Members (all 4 groups) present a relatively cautious perspective, with only 6% seeing communities as completely capable, 66% as to some extent capable, and 25% as very little extent. Overall, 6% of all respondents perceive communities as completely capable, 66% view them as having capacity to some extent, and 25% believe their capacity is at very little extent.

Civil Protection Authority President Babo mentioned one of the biggest limitations to community independence, referring to training activities is the communities' incapacity to apprehend great part of the knowledge at once, and therefore this can only be achieved with regular continuation of trainings to solidify and maintain their knowledge.

> "Localization is the process of individuals being able to protect themselves, local communities being able to protect themselves, and then this then escalated to national protection — this is localization. So, we need plants at local level first and then we can escalate that to a national plan."
> (Ismail da Costa Babo, President Civil Protection Authority)

Caritas Australia and Oxfam mentioned that it is important to note that as much as the training is effective, communities are only able to retain and/or implement a small percentage of the content.

According to Plan International focal point, recent events of strong winds show that communities are not yet able to respond, as many were helpless. Continuing doing drills and simulation exercises connected with early warning systems would be a way to address this.

> "Climate change is not something that started only now, but before we were not aware that it was happening. Now we feel like the rain does not follow its season, sometimes a lot of rain happens. Here out community is already prepared before such a disaster occurs"
> (Male FGD in Ossu de Cima, Viqueque)

"We are already prepared to face disasters like climate change and others. We know how to save our food for longer periods of time and we are also involved in community savings groups, so we can save our money for when a disaster occurs, we can use it"
(Male community member in Ossu de Cima, Viqueque)

According to these informants, the reason or this change has been the intervention of NGOs, as the sharing of information can be long-lasting and communities use it on a daily basis, such as reserving food in advance to prepare for strong winds, or plant trees close to water springs and areas at risk of landslides.

However, participants in the same group also believed that even though communities know of the disasters, they do not show enough interest or awareness and that is why they are not yet completely resilient (community representative).

Women in Viqueque said that they cannot yet be independent as it is difficult to move their houses away from dangerous areas without support from government and agencies:

"No, we are not able to independently respond to disasters because if, for example, we need to relocate our house, where do we go? This is already our land, so we ask the government and agencies to support us to construct our home in a dignified place where we can go".
(Female in Viqueque)

In terms of specific activities communities are able to implement mostly independently, participants in FDGs mentioned some of the following examples:

"I and other community members already have good knowledge of disaster preparedness. The SDMC team and the communities have reached a consensus to participate in the implementation of small actions, such as monitoring high-risk disaster areas, consulting with relevant parties in RAEOA to receive technical assistance for animal disease prevention, promoting the cultivation of seeds, and creating small water reservoirs near the community's living areas and eye plant areas.
The community also has good knowledge about disaster warning signs, storing diversified food sources and participating in savings groups to support their families' needs during natural disasters."
(Male group RAEOA)

Female group in Lautem also mentioned that, as a report of the trainings, they have improved knowledge of the Civil Protection Law, and they know who to refer to in case of a disaster.
"Our community also found information about the civil protection law from Fraterna and CPA in every Suco"
(Female group Lautem)
Furthermore, being engaged in horticultural activities have had immediate results, making them more resilient to droughts and heavy rains. Persons with disabilities within that same group report facilitates access to clean water sources.

4.4.4. Scalability

During the assessment of the most successful Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities in Timor-Leste as outlined above in this chapter, the study informants drew upon the sub-factors of scalability to evaluate the effectiveness of these activities. Particularly focusing on small-scale initiatives like building bridges and implementing early warning systems, especially river

water bed signs, the informants analyzed these activities in light of key sub-factors. Regarding adaptability, they highlighted how these activities naturally align with the needs, population, and geographical conditions of specific locations. For instance, the adaptability was evidenced in the customization of monitoring signs for danger to cater to the unique characteristics of each area. Community engagement being pointed out as one of the factors that determine the successful implementation of activities also indicated how active participation in learning how to use and maintain them, showcasing strong community engagement. In fact, Commander Fatima stated these activities as having the highest potential for scalability:

> "Some activities don't need as much funds, for example setting up risk warning signs, communities already know in what circumstances they need to take precaution. Local authorities also know they need to maintain it, and it is not very expensive to do so. For example, in Viqueque they were able to maintain it independently. By combining this with training of local leaders it adds to the suitability, because they know how to maintain this knowledge and keep the population informed and alert."
> (Second land Commander Civil Protection Authority, Martinho Fatima)

Commander Fatima's insights are in line with the findings for effectiveness, and how cost effectiveness and localization is a driving factor behind the activities' sustainability, indicating that fixing early warning signs is cost-effective and within the capacity of communities to manage independently.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Disaster READY Project (DRP) and other DRR and DRM activities implemented in Timor-Leste by partners and stakeholders have demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in reducing disaster risk and addressing the specific climate resilience and disaster preparedness capacity needs of vulnerable persons. This research has generated key findings that respond to the learning question "which DRP activities or approaches (that address the specific climate resilience and disaster preparedness capacity needs of vulnerable persons) have the potential, and cost-effectiveness, to be replicated at scale by government and other partners in Timor-Leste?" Notably, activities such as Community Action Planning (CAP), Small Scale Disaster Risk Mitigation Activities, Participatory Community Risk Assessment (PCRA), and Gender and People with Disability-related initiatives have yielded the most positive outcomes in terms of effectiveness, inclusiveness and localization. These successes were both a cause and effect of community engagement, local authority support, and the effective performance of NGOs.

In terms of considering the activities that posed more challenges and verifying the scale generally matches those identified as most successful, it becomes evident that these activities align with the categories highlighted earlier, including Community Action Planning, Small Scale Disaster Mitigation Activities, and Participatory Community Risk Assessment. This alignment indicates that these activities, while presenting challenges, hold promise for scalability. Moreover, the congruence in factors contributing to both success and challenges underscores the significance of these factors in determining activity outcomes. Respondents seem to recognize these activities as having high potential for broader implementation, despite acknowledged challenges. With these challenges now identified, proactive measures can be undertaken during the scaling-up process to address them in advance, ensuring a smoother and more effective implementation.

As a result of these activities, the study shows, communities have been empowered to identify risks and hazards, enabling them to take proactive measures and build climate resilience. Small Scale Disaster Mitigation Activities, in particular, provide facilitated access to water, especially for vulnerable groups, and simultaneously a component of climate resilience as much as disaster preparedness. Agriculture groups for community and household gardens and savings groups' activities were recognized by communities as having improved their capacity to respond to disasters and extreme weather events. The adoption of early warning systems has facilitated prompt responses to potential disasters, ensuring better preparedness and reduced vulnerabilities among vulnerable populations. These successful initiatives hold great potential for replication at scale by the government and other partners in Timor-Leste. The high achievement rates in the establishment of disaster plans and the development of risk reduction strategies indicate the feasibility of expanding these approaches to benefit more communities across the country. However, as indicated by findings above, crucial factors such as community participation and ownership, and coordination between all stakeholders must be accounted for in the process of scalability to ensure success. As such, the strong community participation and ownership observed during the implementation of these activities underscore the importance of local involvement, which is essential for the sustainability and effectiveness of any future disaster risk reduction efforts.

Despite growing participation of vulnerable groups in the activities, significant obstacles remain for reaching and engaging women, pregnant and lactating mothers and people with disabilities. Poor accessibility, lack of information and cultural aspects remain the most common barriers to their complete integration. However, findings show that the projects' efforts for inclusion have yielded positive results, despite the challenges. Women feel more capable to participate and offer their contributions, as informed by the group at community level. To further enhance this outcome, activities tailored for their specific needs and capacitation should be implemented, in addition to inclusion efforts for other general activities. Savings groups, for example, were

identified by partners as a capacity-building tool for women, where in addition to managing their savings, the groups provide an opportunity for them to discuss disaster risk management in their own private space.

Activities that happened to be more effective indicate to be cost-efficient to a certain extent, and therefore, according to government and local implementing partners, easily scalable such as small-scale activities. However, to ensure the successful replication of these activities at scale, specific recommendations must be addressed by all stakeholders. Firstly, the government of Timor-Leste should take the lead in coordinating and integrating disaster risk reduction efforts across various line ministries and local levels. This coordination should be based on clear mandates and responsibilities to avoid duplication and confusion.

NGOs and implementing partners should continue to collaborate closely with the government and local communities. Engaging local authorities during the planning and design stages of future projects will ensure alignment with government priorities and facilitate efficient coordination. Moreover, efforts should be made to strengthen local capacity and transfer knowledge to enable communities to sustain the initiatives beyond the project durations. Enhancing community participation, especially among vulnerable groups such as women and people with disabilities, should be a priority. Tailored approaches and awareness-raising activities will encourage inclusive and active engagement in disaster risk reduction activities. Infrastructure development, including roads, water access points, and early warning systems, should be prioritized by the government and relevant agencies. Improved accessibility to remote and vulnerable communities will enhance their resilience and facilitate disaster response. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should continue to be used to assess the impact and effectiveness of replicated activities continually. Gathering feedback and learning from the experiences will help refine future interventions and ensure optimal allocation of resources.

Based on the above, the DRP activities and approaches that have effectively addressed the specific climate resilience and disaster preparedness capacity needs of vulnerable persons in Timor-Leste hold significant potential and cost-effectiveness for replication at scale. By strengthening community engagement, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, and investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, the government and partners can ensure that disaster risk reduction efforts are sustainable, inclusive, and impactful for vulnerable populations. The collective commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders will be crucial in building a safer and more resilient future for the people of Timor-Leste.

The following set of recommendations and suggestions to AHP agencies from this research on DRP activities related to effectiveness, inclusivity, localization, and scalability.

Effectiveness:

- **Coordination:** Agencies and government alike should foster collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders to prevent overlapping efforts and to maximize the impact of disaster risk reduction activities. Ensuring all actors work together will streamline interventions and resource utilization. For this, the development of a unified and comprehensive national strategy/mechanism such as an SOP or contingency plan, including all disasters at national and local levels, and responsibilities, needs to be developed in collaboration with all stakeholders and approved by the government.
- **Capacity Building and Monitoring:** Agencies should continue their efforts on capacity building for local communities and authorities to enable them to implement DRR plans effectively. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to assess the capacity and progress of local communities in implementing their plans. On the other hand, authorities at local and national level should also take responsibility and action to implement the key learnings from the trainings, as well as ensuring continuation of knowledge maintenance and practice within the communities so it does not get lost. That

is, they should assume responsibility by not only applying the key insights from the trainings but also by fostering an environment where this knowledge is continuously reinforced, maintained, and actively practiced within the communities. Whenever possible, government and authorities should take the lead in escalating training modules the DRP and other projects that have proved successful to new areas that have not been covered.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure efficient and effective use of financial resources in disaster risk reduction projects. Regular monitoring and reporting should be implemented to track the allocation and execution of funds on behalf of all stakeholders.

Inclusivity:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Project teams should consider, in addition to training, conducting awareness campaigns, sensitization programs and other practical demonstrations and engagement to promote inclusivity to address cultural barriers and stereotypes that hinder the meaningful participation of vulnerable groups, such as women, pregnant and lactating mothers and people with disabilities, in disaster risk reduction initiatives should be one of the main priorities. Some recommendations to effectively address these cultural barriers and stereotypes are for project initiatives to showcase practical success cases during training and sensitization initiatives, where inclusivity of these groups has effectively increased safety in disaster response for the whole community. This helps overlook deeply rooted stereotypes and prioritize safety for all. Awareness campaigns can also challenge existing stereotypes, while engagement with vulnerable groups can ensure their concerns are addressed directly. Collaborating with NGOs and advocacy groups that work with vulnerable communities additionally offers deeper insights into specific challenges. In addition, learning from CARE's Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach, AHP agencies could replicate this approach to challenge cultural barriers in the community.
- **Targeted Capacity Building:** Project activities should include more targeted capacity-building programs for vulnerable groups to empower them with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in decision-making processes related to climate resilience and disaster preparedness. For example, carry out trainings and activities specifically tailored for people with disabilities or pregnant and lactating mothers in addition to efforts for inclusion in general activities.
- **Dissemination of Laws and Policies:** Improve the dissemination of existing laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction at the community level as part of awareness raising and training activities (coordinated between government and agencies). Make sure the information reaches the communities in a language and format that is easily understandable, emphasizing their rights and responsibilities in disaster-prone areas.

Localization:

- **Coordination and Resource Allocation:** Improve coordination between all stakeholders, including government authorities and NGOs, to prevent overlapping activities in disaster risk reduction efforts. Advocate for a more localized government budget allocation to support disaster management at the community level.
- **Capacity Building for Local Authorities:** Provide capacity-building opportunities for local authorities to enhance their decision-making power and management of disaster risk reduction plans. Empower them with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead effective disaster preparedness and response efforts.
- **Decentralization of Decision Making:** AHP agencies and partners should support in socialization of respective laws at the sub national level jointly with government, such as the Local Power Law. This will start to enable local authorities to take ownership of disaster risk management initiatives, tailor them to the specific needs of their communities, and ensure sustainability.

- **Regular Training and Socialization:** Continue conducting regular training and socialization programs to ensure that communities remain informed and prepared to respond to disasters. Continuous learning and practice will build the resilience of communities in the face of climate-related challenges (government and agencies).

Scalability:

- **Adaptability:** one of the factors identified for scalability is the capacity to easily adapt and be customized to suit different contexts or settings regarding diverse population, geographical areas and topography, communication and accessibility facilities, etc. The success of Small-Scale Disaster Mitigation Activities across DRP target areas revealed in this study indicated the potential of these for scalability;
- **Community Engagement:** as revealed by findings, community engagement, to the extent observed in activities such as CAP, SSDRMA and Trainings is a fundamental aspect for activity success and scalability, granting these activities potential for scalability.
- **Cost Efficiency and Resource Sustainability:** the activities' potential to be maintained and continue delivering benefits even after scaling up — considering aspects such as community ownership, knowledge maintenance, stakeholder engagement and integration into existing systems or structures — is also a fundamental aspect for scalability according to the study's findings. SSDRMAs in particular were identified as cost-effective, while Trainings revealed effective since communities were able to apply, replicate and maintain the knowledge acquired, when supported by local actors.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** DRP Project efforts should continue to prioritize the sharing of good practices and learnings from project implementation with government authorities to facilitate scalability.

In **conclusion**, as per the key research objective, research findings during the first year of implementation of DRP II, show that activities likely to be scaled by the government are Community Action Planning (CAP), Small Scale Disaster Risk Mitigation Activities (SSDRMA), and Participatory Community Risk Assessment (PCRA). This is due to their scalability potential, including efficiency of planning and implementation, adaptability to different locations, inclusivity and cost-efficiency. For these activities, however, to be scaled successfully, measures need to be taken in advance to ensure community engagement and ownership, support from local authorities and proper allocation of resources and inclusion of vulnerable groups such as women and people with disabilities from the onset.

Annexes:

- FGDs guide

- KII guide: