

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organisation committed to eliminating extreme poverty and vulnerability. It provides emergency support and longer-term development to over 20 countries including Zambia, where it has been using disaster risk reduction (DRR) as a mechanism for reducing risk and addressing extreme poverty in the Western Province since 2005. In this area its direct DRR work is centred on building the capacity of government disaster management at local community levels (satellite disaster management committees, or SDMCs) and district levels (district disaster management committees, or DDMCs). Its work is award winning: in 2011 Concern won the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) award for excellence in DRR. To share Concern's experiences and build better DRR practice, this report documents Concern Worldwide's approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Zambia.

Zambia is home to a number of risks including drought, flood, fires, land degradation, HIV/AIDS, and diarrheal diseases. Indeed, Concern first started working in Zambia in 2002 in response to the South Africa regional food crisis caused in part by a drought. Like much of Southern Africa, however, the area does not face high risk due to its hazard burden—it experiences relatively few hazards compared to other countries at similar risk levels—but rather because of its extreme vulnerability due to few resources including material poverty and lack of services.

As Concern understands the links between poverty and disaster risk, it considers DRR as a crosscutting issue important to all programmes. It includes natural hazards like drought and flooding as risks to be addressed as part of DRR, as well as manmade hazards like conflict, disease, and policies institutions and process.

Many of Concern's activities in Zambia reduce disaster risk indirectly by building the natural, human, and financial capitals necessary for improved resilience. The work of the SDMCs and DDMCs, on the other hand directly targets some of the most pressing risks including flooding, drought, and fires. They address these risks in a variety of ways such as mobilising for emergency response, clearing canals to reduce flood hazards, and constructing fire-breaks rates of fire spread. Some also perform activities outside their mandates including infrastructure development such as the construction and maintenance of basic roads, schools, and hospitals.

Concern's approach to working closely with government disaster management committees works very well in Zambia, and Concern has developed considerable expertise in this work which it recently codified in the SDMC training manual facilitator's guide (Concern in Zambia, 2012). A few of the many benefits of this approach include local ownership over risk reduction activities and reinforcing state governance structures. Such an approach also allows for a highly effective form of soft advocacy, which the organisation uses to realign some of the political activities that create risk.

Zambia is a signatory to the 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action, the UN policy body on disaster risk reduction. Concern's disaster risk reduction work in Zambia can be

summarised within the five priority action areas found in the Hyogo Framework for Action (adapted from Hunt, 2012):

- 1 prioritize DRR in governance at all levels**
  - Strengthens disaster management committees (DDMC) at the district levels (4 districts of the Western Province) and establishes satellite disaster management committees (SDMC) at the community level
  - Helps ensure Disaster Management Policy (2005), the Disaster Management Operational Manual (2005) and the Disaster Management Act (2010) are followed and its contents are shared
  - Uses a soft approach to advocacy at local and district levels to build DRM importance and resolve governance conflicts at local to provincial levels
  - Is involved in national level DRR policy work through the ZVAC
  
- 2 identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning**
  - Uses SDMC meetings to share meteorological early warning system warnings and alerts
  - SDMCs report on localised events where more than 10 people are affected
  - Member of DDMC, which is involved in EWS data collection and dissemination
  
- 3 use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety**
  - Facilitates public awareness campaigns are run by the SDMC, especially campaigns regarding the clearance of canals and firebreaks
  - Has codified best practices SDMC training manual facilitator's guide and has used guide to build safe practices across groups
  
- 4 reduce underlying risk factors**
  - Facilitates canal clearing, which improves drainage of wetland areas so as to make them available for agriculture (improving food security) and delaying the onset of floods, and reducing the prevalence of vector borne diseases including malaria and AWD
  - Uses NRM to reduce the pressure on forest resources and thus control, to an extent, flooding
  - Educates farmers in appropriate agricultural practices including conservation agriculture, which reduces land degradation and helps adapt to changing climate
  - Strengthens SDMCs to the extent that they become vehicles for other larger infrastructure development projects like health centres, schools, and roads
  - Facilitates building of fire breaks
  
- 5 strengthen preparedness at all levels**
  - Supports SDMCs who can respond to events that affect less than 10 households
  - Builds internal preparedness through the participation in preparedness in effective emergency response training (PEER)

Given the area's high levels of poverty, vulnerability, and inequality, low levels of productive assets, and limited government support, the Western Province presents a challenging case for those attempting to reduce disaster risk. Concern's work however, demonstrates that even in this environment it is possible to successfully reduce disaster risk in an efficient and socially appropriate manner. There are, however a few areas where it is recommended the organisation consider expanding its efforts including: systematizing its disaster risk assessment to include more formal assessment methods; broadening its advocacy to wider number of provincial political figures to reduce the politicisation of SDMCs; and increasing training to improve financial capacity of SDMCs.

